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ABSTRACT

This program overview discusses the aims and organization of the Preschool Correspondence Program (PSCP) in Queensland, Australia, accenting the development of the Correspondence Unit within the Preschool Education Division of the Queensland Department of Education. Four functions of preschool education, conditions seen to be necessary for the fulfillment of the functions, and implications for the PSCP are discussed. Program planning options are described. A decision was made to implement a flexible uniform program from a central facility. Key aims and principles of the PSCP are listed and core program materials, administrative structures and the development of parent organizei play groups are reported. Major thrusts of planned program evaluation efforts are indicated. Eleven appendices, comprising four-fifths of the document, provide an initial statement of PSCP intentions and procedures and program materials including a parent contact information booklet, a resource book for parents, teaching guides, work sheets, a story book, transcriptions of taped songs and poems, a teacher information sheet, and guides for setting up a parent organized play group. (Author/RH)

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No. 2 in a series on the evaluation
of the Queensland Pre-School Correspondence Program

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THE PRE-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM AN OVERVIEW

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December 1975 (Revised September, 1978)

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

THE PROGRAM IN CONTEXT 2

System-wide Functions of Pre-School Education 2
Necessary Conditions 4
Implications for a Pre-School Correspondence Program 6
Program options 7

P.S.C.P. AIMS AND PROCESSES 10

Aims 11
Materials 12
Program Processes 13
Unit Organization 16
SPAN Play Groups 18

THE RESEARCH PROJECT 19

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Pre-School Correspondence Unit: Administrative Structure 16
Figure 2: Pre-School Correspondence Unit: Functional Groups 17
Figure 3: P.S.C.P. Basic Network of Elements 19
Figure 4: P.S.C.P. Elaborated Network of Elements 20

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix I: Initial Statement of Intentions and Procedures for the P.S.C.P. (from Harley, M. J., 1974) 22
Appendix II: Contact 24
Appendix III: Resource Book 29
Appendix IV: Segment Booklet 47
Appendix V: Supplementary Work Sheets 61
Appendix VI: Story Books 66
Appendix VII: Segment Cassette Tape 70
Appendix VIII: Teacher Information Sheet 77
Appendix IX: SPAN Equipment Kit 84
Appendix X: Introducing SPAN 101
Appendix XI: SPAN supplementary material 109

References 116

INTRODUCTION

In May 1972 the Queensland State Government announced a new policy concerning pre-school education. It was proposed that free pre-school education would be made available to all children aged 4–5 years whose parents wished it. It was also announced that this policy would be implemented by the Queensland Department of Education and that pre-school education would be an integral element in the overall provision of educational facilities and services provided by the State.

Queensland became the first Australian State to move towards a state-wide pre-school scheme and its announcement led very quickly to the development of a comprehensive pre-school system. Given the geography of the State and the distribution of the population, (Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975) it became evident that a number of innovatory approaches would be necessary if the goal of state-wide provision was to be achieved. The Pre-School Correspondence Program (PSCP) represented one such innovatory response.

The purpose of this report is two-fold. First, an examination is made of the aims and organization of the PSCP. In undertaking this task, attention focuses upon the stated purposes of the scheme in relation to the broader system of pre-school education as provided by the Queensland Department of Education. Second, an overview is provided of the research project itself. In undertaking this second task, it is not intended to engage in detailed discussion; this will be covered in a series of subsequent reports on specific topics. Rather, the intention is to provide a broad overview of the direction of the research and some discussion of guiding principles.

Throughout all the reports which will be produced as part of the study, the term "correspondence education" will be consistently employed. This term has been used throughout Australia for more than 50 years to describe educational provisions for children who receive instruction by means of printed lessons. In recent years printed lessons have been augmented by the use of a variety of media (e.g. taped cassettes). Further, the term "distance education" is now often used to replace the term correspondence education. However, the central concern of all correspondence schools (or units) is the delivery of education to those children, who for reasons of isolation, remoteness or health considerations are not able to attend a regular school. The aim of correspondence programs is to provide children with access to materials and experiences that promote and sustain learning.

THE PROGRAM IN CONTEXT

The Pre-School Education Division of the Queensland Department of Education has adopted the tactic of stating its system-wide aims in the form of "functions-to-be-served" by the pre-school facilities established under its aegis. These statements provide a basic framework within which pre-school facilities and services operate. It is a requirement that those responsible for the operation of such facilities and services detail the specific aims they seek to achieve. Thus, it is the responsibility of the Pre-School Correspondence Unit to articulate its aims within the system-wide framework. Therefore, it is proposed to examine the stated functions of pre-school education in Queensland before detailing the specific aims of the PSCP.

System-wide Functions of Pre-School Education

Four statements of the functions of pre-school education have been detailed by the Pre-School Education Division of the Queensland Department of Education (Queensland Department of Education, 1975). These statements place the main emphasis in pre-school education on enhancing the development and educational progress of the individual child within the context of the home and community environment.

- To provide a bridge by which the young child can be assisted to make a smooth transition from home to school.
- To encourage parent interest and participation in the education process.
- To promote the physical and emotional health of the young child.
- To develop those abilities, skills and attitudes which will aid educational progress.

Each of these functions has been spelt out by the Pre-School Branch in some detail (Queensland Department of Education, 1975). Such detail includes both the basis of each function and also specification of certain necessary conditions required to support fulfilment of the functions. The latter refer to programs, physical plant and the provision of human and material resources. What appears below is an abbreviated summary of the beliefs that underlie the four functions.

Home to School

The home is seen as representing the first and in many ways the most important source of learning in the child's life. It is the avenue by which many of the most fundamental attitudes, ideas and skills are acquired. Further, acquisitions made during the very earliest years of life often exercise a profound pro-active influence over the course of subsequent learning.

However, the home frequently provides a much narrower social environment than, say, the school. At the school the young child learns and plays in the company of age mates, has independence thrust upon him and must adjust to new demands and expectations which are often quite unlike those of the home. For numbers of children the transition from home to school is both acute and dramatic. It is believed that for almost all children the transition can be made smoother through the influence of the pre-school.

Thus, the pre-school educational program is designed to provide experiences which are built upon and extend home (and community) experience of the young child. The use of concrete materials that can be readily manipulated and employed by the child is a key element in the educative process. Further, attention to individual needs, abilities and interests is fundamental in planning the pre-school program.

Parent Involvement

Parents are viewed as important teachers of the young child and therefore it follows that both pre-school and home should work together. It is this requirement that gives to the pre-school (and indeed other educational institutions) a dual role: on the one hand to provide appropriate educational programs for young children and, on the other hand, to provide opportunity for parent learning and participation in such programs.

In cases where parents do not understand or support the objectives of an educational program for young children, its overall effectiveness is reduced. Similarly, where an educational program is insensitive to home or community teaching it will also lose at least part of its impact. Thus, it is important for parents not only to be informed about the objectives of programs, but also that they play some part in both examining and influencing the objectives that are adopted. While there are many ways that communication between teachers and parents may be fostered and sustained, one important means is through parents' participation in the education process itself. When there is close co-operation and understanding between parents and teachers, the developing needs of the individual child are more likely to be fully appreciated and catered for.

Promote Health

The term health is used in a broad sense, referring not only to the maintenance and promotion of physical and emotional well-being but also to those other aspects of the child's development which might have effects upon learning and progress in schooling. This is not to suggest that adequate diet, high standards of physical care and satisfying emotional relationships during the early years provide immunity from later disease and disorder. Rather, that such provisions ensure the young child a good start. However, many problems in both the physical and educational spheres which beset children later on can be recognised in the pre-school years. Early diagnosis and treatment can often offset or reduce the effects of many such problems.

In this particular regard the pre-school does not stand alone. Rather diagnostic and preventative action calls for close co-operation not only between teachers and parents but also between both these and others, such as physicians, therapists, guidance personnel and welfare workers.

Develop Skills, Abilities and Attitudes

In promoting learning, pre-school education works from two frames of reference. First, educational programs must be designed in such a way to take account of the identifiable present (and likely future) needs of the child. Second, pre-schools operate within the context of a continuum of educational provision moving through primary and secondary schooling and beyond.

The first frame of reference places the individual at the centre of the learning process. (This applies as much to teachers and parents as to children.) Further, the process of meeting individual needs occurs within the context of the home and the community environment. Thus, there can be no single uniform curriculum which is rigidly prescribed for all pre-schools.

The second frame of reference highlights the importance of continuity between the various levels within an education system. Just as there should be some commonality of purpose among pre-schools, so must commonalities also exist between the various levels of schooling. In the latter, attention must be given not only to achieving continuity of objectives but also in the areas of teaching style and classroom climate.

Bearing these twin considerations in mind, a number of broad educational aims for pre-school education, within the Queensland Department of Education, have been stated. These are:

- To assist the child to develop a positive self-image.
- To encourage the child to become self-reliant in learning and to exercise choice.
- To assist the child to share and co-operate with others and to accept other people.
- To promote learning in the areas of language use and its associated skills, concept formation, perceptual acuity and problem solving.
- To assist the child to develop a range of appropriate social and physical skills.
- To foster the child's ability to think imaginatively and to express himself creatively through music, movement and various art media.

Necessary Conditions

A number of conditions have also been stated (Queensland Department of Education, 1975) which are seen as necessary for the fulfilment of the four major functions of the pre-school system as a whole.

First, the pre-school program must be sensitive to the needs of the particular children enrolled at a particular centre and provide stimulation, guidance, motivation, support, and access to materials and other resources. Further, it is believed that the curiosity, interests and activity of the child must be utilized. At the same time the young child requires freedom to explore, encouragement to sustain interests and activity, and guidance in making sound choices and decisions. Finally, the young child requires help to deal with both success and frustration. Thus, in the pre-school, focus of attention is upon the individual's progress in learning rather than upon the group as a whole.

Second, the pre-school should present an attractive, interesting "informal" environment. Use of the term "informal" is intended to suggest that the pre-school program be flexible and open-ended; that the teacher have freedom to capitalize upon the spontaneous interests and opportunities for further learning which occur during the course of teaching. Further, the program is "informal" in the sense that many activities may be going on at once. If children are to have freedom to explore and to make choices it becomes necessary to permit a variety of activities to be engaged in simultaneously. Thus, at any one time individual children might be engaged in block play indoors, in activities in the outdoor learning area, in discussions with the teacher, in individual work with manipulative materials, in art work, in the library corner or in dramatic play.

Third, learning in various content areas should be integrated in such a way to permit a continuous flow in the activity and involvement of the child. The term integration refers to the linking of various learning objectives with one another and the pursuit of those objectives throughout all activities offered through the program. Such an approach makes full use of the child's own activity as a basis for development of skills, concepts and attitudes and may be contrasted with the division of such activity into subject units or time-tabled periods. Thus, for example in an integrated approach, language goals may be pursued not only through stories or other selected language arts activities, but also through art, music and movement, during rambles in the community, outdoor play and, indeed, every activity undertaken by the child.

Fourth, the total environment of the pre-school, its outdoor space, its fittings and equipment should be designed to provide for maximum flexibility in use. The setting should permit the child to operate as freely and with as much independence as is consistent with his level of development and within the constraints of his own safety. Further, it is important that within such an environment there be a wide range and adequate supply of appropriate materials and equipment.

Fifth, there should be available the necessary human resources to help promote the growth of the child. A key figure is the teacher, who must be well versed in understanding both the process of human development and of education. However, teachers require assistance. This is usually provided by the aide and parents. Beyond this, however, it is important to provide for advisory and other resource services to assist the teacher with planning and management. Insight into child behaviour and the ability to interact sensitively and positively with young children coupled with ability to plan, initiate, reinforce and sustain learning are fundamental skills that teachers must possess. Also teachers must be willing to share their knowledge, skill and insights with others. Without these ingredients, the pre-school simply becomes a building and a collection of equipment in which educational possibilities and purposes lie latent. The warmth of the climate created by the teacher and the other adults is the foundation upon which the pre-school rests.

Implications for a Pre-School Correspondence Program

The foregoing, provides an overview of the commitments of the pre-school system of the Queensland Department of Education. It was within this system that the Pre-School Correspondence Unit was established in May, 1973. Although the Primary Correspondence School had been assisting children in geographically isolated areas with their education since 1922, no previous attempt had been made to provide a pre-school correspondence program for children in similar geographic locations and there was no known precedent for such a program on a large scale.

Some of the more important implications for a pre-school correspondence program which flow from these commitments will be identified.

With regard to the first function (i.e. *Home to School*), while many children enrolled in the PSCP move onto small country schools for their primary education, a significant proportion continue with correspondence education. For the latter there is no transition problem so far as social setting is concerned, but of course there maybe differences in curricula, procedures and teaching styles. However, it was believed that movement from the pre-school correspondence program to the Primary Correspondence School might place heavy demands upon parents, who assume major responsibility for assisting their children to master specific academic skills and competencies. Thus, a pre-school correspondence program should offer assistance to parents to move into these new spheres with confidence and some measure of preparation for their role in their child's future education. Further, given the importance of socialization as part of the child's overall development, it is highly desirable for a correspondence program to explore ways of fostering peer contact among young children not able to attend regular pre-schools.

The second stated function (i.e. *Parent Involvement*) has complex implications for a correspondence program. In this regard it is important to distinguish that form of teaching which parents naturally and universally perform as parents, from that teaching which more generally is performed by professionally trained teachers. In a pre-school correspondence program implementation is dependent upon parents (or in some cases a parent substitute e.g. a governess). Thus the task is two-fold: promoting those parenting skills of the kind generally undertaken within pre-school education and also developing more specific teaching skills that will assist parents to cope with the demands of teaching an educational program. A further aspect is that any feed-back on both the program in general and in particular, an individual child's achievement is heavily dependent upon parent participation. Both types of feed-back are important. The former is important in monitoring and evaluating program materials and procedures. The latter is of direct importance to teachers working with a particular family.

The third function (i.e. *Promote Health*) implies the availability of diagnostic, remedial and support services for children in isolated areas, similar to those provided to pre-school children and families in the more populated areas of the State. However, the high cost of such services and devising ways that such services might be delivered in remote and isolated areas pose problems.

The fourth function (i.e. *Develop Skills, Abilities and Attitudes*) most obviously relates to the structure and selection of content of a pre-school correspondence program. In this regard highly interesting educational issues are involved. On the one hand the delivery of education by correspondence, whether pre-school, primary, secondary or technical education, implies that materials have to be carefully structured and planned well in advance to enable them to be produced and packaged. Such an approach suggests a degree of uniformity, at least with respect of the materials that are forwarded to all children. On the other hand, the use of uniform materials for all children at a given level runs counter to the very fundamental view that individual differences in development and environmental experience must be catered for. Pre-school education, in particular, has for many years accepted the principle of catering for individual needs as the cornerstone of its philosophy.

Alongside these considerations, other factors related to dispersement of population, distances involved, climatic conditions and related issues must also be weighed up. These factors are set out in some detail in Ashby, McGaw and Grant (1975).

Program Options

The lack of data base meant that program developers had to select from a range of options in establishing the program as well as explore and develop a variety of previously untested procedures and materials. Thus, the first few years of the program's operation were regarded as experimental and formative.

Conceptually, options for the development of the PSCP can be generalized as falling along two intersecting axes.

Axis A is concerned with the form of the program materials (i.e. the syllabus).

Axis B relates to the mode of delivery of the program and, consequently, the deployment of personnel and resources.

Axis A

Three broad options can be distinguished along Axis A.

> Option A – I. This option involves the preparation of a single set of materials which all participants would be expected to complete without variation. Such an option would take the form of a syllabus of required work and would reflect the approach to curriculum that was popularly employed in the first half of this century. This approach could be called the *Uniform Syllabus.* It represents an effective means of ensuring that pre-selected basic skills are developed, but is not able to take individual differences in development status of children or differences in the teaching abilities of parents into account, although the latter may be off-set by "teacher-proofing".

Thus, while this option represents the simplest administrative alternative, it is in direct contradiction to the aim of achieving individualized programs.

Option A – II. Theoretically, and at the other extreme of the continuum, it is possible to envisage specific programs being developed for each individual child. Although each program would be unique it is also possible to envisage that in some learning areas (e.g. number, language, arts, fine and gross motor skills, etc.), comprehensive sets of materials graded in terms of ability levels, might be available for teachers to make appropriate selections for each individual. This approach would yield a *Fully Individualized Program*, capable of responding to the developmental level and learning style of the child and the teaching ability and style of the parent.

Whilst this option provides individualization, it is heavily dependent on the teacher's judgement. This implies the existence of a high level of precision in diagnosis plus the existence of a comprehensive bank of appropriate materials. Neither of these conditions exist to any substantial degree. Further, as the initial judgement and consequent choice of a particular set of materials is necessarily made on the basis of information provided by parents, the possibility of a mistaken assessment exists. There is also a danger that the 'labelling' associated with the initial assessment, could become permanent, with failure to recognize development or progress. Such dangers inherent in this option could, therefore, prove counter productive to the very aim of individualization it was designed to achieve.

Option A – III. The third possible strategy represents a compromise between Options I and II. Under this option the strategy would involve the development of a comprehensive, but uniform, set of materials that would cover a wide spectrum of development levels within the target age-range. More materials than could be reasonably dealt with by one child would be assembled into a single package. The role of teachers, would be crucial and, it would be their responsibility to help parents select appropriate materials from the full range of resources offered. Parents could also select additional materials for their children on the basis of changing interests and motivation. This approach could be called the *Flexible Uniform Program.*

In practical terms this third option represented a realistic format which could be developed by the program designers reasonably quickly. Implementation was not totally dependent on the diagnostic skills of teachers, although clearly teacher guidance in helping parents to select materials suitable to the individual child would be important if successful implementation was to be achieved. However, adoption of this option would be justified only in the short-term as a means of creating a data bank of information to assist with the planning of more individualized approaches.

Axis B

The delivery of correspondence education can also be conceived along a continuum ranging from centralized to decentralized provision. Three options along this continuum can be identified.

Option B – I. This option would involve the location of all personnel and facilities in one location and could be described as *Fully Centralized.* Under such a provision all materials would be prepared and dispatched from the central office and all returns would flow back for processing and reply to that office. In the extreme form of central provision teaching staff would have no face to face contact with parents or pupils unless they visited the central office. Communication would be limited to written, printed, visual and audio materials which would be transmitted by mail. Thus, a *Fully Centralized* provision either inhibits or complicates the extent to which correspondence education can be individualized.

Centralization permits aggregation of resources and expertise as well as having certain administrative advantages. Indeed centralization has been a feature at all levels of correspondence education in Australia until very recently. However, because postal services represent the major means of transmitting communications, delays in time between question and response are inevitable. Of course, there are a wide range of ways by which communications technology could provide solutions, however, these solutions are not presently available to any large extent in outback Queensland. (or other outback areas of Australia.)[1]

Option B – II. At the other extreme of the continuum is *Fully Decentralized provision.* This could take a variety of forms but in essence, involves the location of teachers in regional centres which would enable them to regularly visit each family and work with both parents and children. Further, a totally decentralized scheme would also involve the preparation of specific program materials at each regional centre. The effort involved in creating materials is considerable and hence involves a major cost factor. However, it is possible to envisage a decentralized provision which could make use of centrally developed program materials. This would represent an effective and economical compromise if a decentralized system were provided.

Decentralization has a major advantage in facilitating communication. So long as individual teaching loads are maintained at reasonable levels it should be possible for families to be visited reasonably regularly. The face to face contact between teacher and parents and children is an important factor for achieving a high level of rapport as well as of the need of both parent and child. Hence the individualization of the program would be a reasonable and achieveable goal. Further, if locations for the placement of teachers were selected in terms of the major traffic corridors, families could both be brought together at regular intervals and pay other visits to the centre. However, the selection of locations, the development of an appropriate model for the delivery of services presumes an adequate information basis for decision making. As has previously been noted, this did not exist. Thus, while a move to decentralization was seen as a desirable long-term objective, it was not deemed viable in the short-term.

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(1) Queensland has developed a system of Schools of the Air (these also operate in some other States). However, these are limited by the range of transmitters, the frequencies available, and the time for broadcasting. (See McGaw, B. & Ashby, G. (eds) National Conference on Pre-School Education for Isolated Children. Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1977 – various papers.)

Option B – III. In between the extremes of full centralization and full decentralization there are a variety of intermediate options. Two variations could be identified. First, the development of a *mixed approach* involving some teachers being located in certain regional centres and others at a central facility. Regional centres might be located in those areas where distances are reasonable and there is a reasonable concentration of families. All other teachers, together with the various resource services, could be located centrally. Second, to locate all teachers centrally but provide each with the opportunity to visit the families they work with on some regular basis. Naturally, the number of such visits undertaken by teachers would be considerably fewer than what might be achieved under a regionalized approach. This second option could be called *Functional Centralization* in that all major functions are provided centrally but opportunity is provided for teachers to move out to work directly with parents and children. For a variety of reasons the second of the two approaches identified under Option B – III (i.e. *Functional Centralization*) represented the most practical in the short term. Some of the reasons for this can be spelt out. First, firm data concerning predicted enrolment trends in the P.S.C.P. was entirely absent. Thus, the selection of appropriate regional centres could not be made without running the risk of having to transfer the location at the end of each year. Second, although the matter of transferring a location would not be difficult it is also the responsibility of the Department of Education to provide housing for teachers in rural areas. The provision and maintenance of such housing requires very careful planning to ensure the efficient allocation of resources. Third, the costs of maintaining an itinerant teacher in the field are very considerable. These costs not only are economic but also personal. Because of distances, climatic conditions, topography and the nature of roads, the toll on an individual may be very great. It is not unusual for Education Department officers working from regional centres to drive more than 60,000 kilometres annually. Fourth, clear specification of roles and procedures is an initial planning requirement for the development of a regional based itinerant teacher scheme and such data was entirely absent and required detailed investigation. Fifth, in the early stages of development of a major initiative there are clear advantages to be gained from concentrating personnel and resources to ensure maximum interchange of ideas. Finally, selection of this option was not seen as pre-empting any subsequent move to a more decentralized form of organization.

Thus, from the two axes, the options of the *Flexible Uniform Syllabus* and the *Functional Centralization* were each selected on short-term pragmatic grounds as the basis for developing the P.S.C.P.

P.S.C.P. AIMS AND PROCESS

Working within the broad system framework and after reviewing various planning options, an initial statement of intention and procedures was developed. These have been reported by Harley (1974) and are reproduced in Appendix 1.

This initial statement was seen as a prelude to a more comprehensive statement to be developed in the light of experience. The reason for adopting this approach rested upon the absence of any substantial body of previous experience upon which to base developments. Further, because there was an immediate demand to provide a service for families in remote and isolated areas it was necessary to implement the initial program very quickly. Thus, a strategy involving formative development evaluation – modification was decided upon. Indeed, it was this very strategy which formed the basis of the Pre-School Correspondence Evaluation Project as an essential element in the process of assessing and modifying the P.S.C.P., its materials and processes.

As a basis for the development of the program it was decided that initially, efforts would be directed towards the construction of a *Flexible Uniform Program* and that procedures would be trialled to ensure that such a program permitted maximum individualization. Further, it was also decided that, at least in the short-term , a central facility (i.e. *Functional Centralization*) would be developed, but that teachers would be enabled to visit their families at least once a year. Finally it was decided that efforts would be directed towards the establishment of a number of ancillary services to support both the Pre-School Correspondence Program and children and parents.

Aims

The refinement of the initial statement, referred to above, resulted in a set of propositions which reflect the key aims and principles of the Pre-School Correspondence Program. These were:

1. To construct a home-based, early childhood education program, taking into account the variability of geographic and environmental settings and the special needs of the children who would receive the program.

2. To ensure that within this program a "core" was developed which would promote the cognitive, affective, psycho-motor and (in so far as is possible) the social development of children; and in particular that the program materials provide learning experiences in the following specific content areas:
   - self-knowledge and self-reliance in learning;
   - language arts and associated skills, including auditory and perceptual skills;
   - appropriate concepts and skills from mathematics and the physical and social sciences, including the development of relevant problem solving and inquiry skills;
   - motor skill development and co-ordination at both the fine and gross levels;
   - imaginative thinking and creative expression through music, movement, dance and various art media.

3. To ensure that both the materials and the guidance given to parents in their use emphasise the principle of learning, proceeding on the basis of the child's active involvement with people, objects and events in the every day environment and through interaction on a 'one-to-one' basis with the "parent-teacher".

4. To maximise, to the extent possible within a correspondence-style program, direct, warm and positive communication between "unit-based teachers", "parent-teachers" and children as a basis for individualizing the "core" program to meet particularly family circumstances.

5. To support parents positively both in the role of teacher and as parent and in particular to promote the acquisition of those skills and techniques that facilitate the formation of a positive self-image, self-reliance in learning and a sense of growing competence on the part of the child.

6. To ensure that the role of the teacher both in the "unit-based" and home situations is defined as 'active' and 'supportive': that the initiation of action through suggestion, instruction and re-inforcement and the sustaining of learning through warm interactions are treated equal .

7. To establish such support services as may be required to supplement the "core" educational program.

8. To provide such opportunity for peer group socialization as may be possible within the limitations of family circumstance and opportunity.

9. To endeavour to provide a smooth transition from the pre-school program to primary schooling, whether this be by correspondence or attendance (Harley, Grant and Ashby, 1978).

Materials

The term "core" program is used to refer to the standard set of materials which go to make up the Pre-School Correspondence Program. These materials are divided into eight segments which are sent out at between 4–6 week intervals and together provide resources for one cycle of work. The total program is called "The Child and His World". The various segment titles are:

Segment 1. Self-Identification – content focussed on self-awareness and the development of self-esteem.

Segment 2. Daily Living – content related to membership of family, experiences within family groups.

Segment 3. Environment – content aimed at developing awareness of the immediate environment, especially social dependency.

Segment 4. Perception – visual, auditory, tactile and oral.

Segment 5. Classification – content gave particular regard to sets and numbers.

Segment 6. Relationships – concentrated upon positional relationship, mass and volume, estimation and measurement.

Segment 7. Independence and responsibility.

Segment 8. Personal Relationships – content emphasized the importance of the child's ability to relate to other people.

Each segment consists of the following:

Segment News
A brief version of the content of the segment.

Segment Booklet
This is a comprehensive guide, organized around specific topics, which provides an exhaustive range of information activities and suggestions covering the 4–6 week period. The booklet is written for the "parent-teacher" who works with the child. (See Appendix IV)

In general segment Booklets provide more material than any one individual could cover in the Segment period.

The Program Workbook
This is carried out by the teacher and contains activities that the child can complete and return to the unit-based teacher. These workbooks are not sent out with every Segment Booklet. They are often replaced by or accompanied by several supplementry Work Sheets. (See Appendix V)

Story Books
These are custom produced booklets which relate to the various topics that comprise the segment. (See Appendix VI)

Segment Cassette Tape
A custom produced tape of stories, poems, music and movement which relate to the segment topics. (See Appendix VII)

Teacher Information Sheet
A summing-up of the segment, completed by the parent-teacher and revised by the unit-based teacher. (See Appendix VIII)

Also forwarded to all parents is:

Contact
This booklet is produced as an information booklet and is distributed to all parents as a means of informal and topical contact. Contact is not sent with every Segment Booklet, but each month of the teaching year. (See Appendix II)

Program Processes

In line with the regulations governing admission to State Pre-School Centres in Queensland, enrolment in the P.S.C.P. is restricted to children aged 4 years plus. More particularly children must, to be eligible, meet one of the following requirements;

—71016

- would be eligible in the year following admission to the P.S.C.P. for entry to the Primary Correspondence School i.e. lives at least 3.2 kilometres from the nearest school bus route.
- live in an area served by a Class V or Class VI Primary School (See Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975).
- cannot attend a regular pre-school because of health or other disability.
- is a member of a family (normally resident in Queensland) temporarily residing inter-State or overseas.

Upon admission each child is allocated to a unit-based teacher who is responsible for a "class" of 30. "Classes" are organized, as far as possible, in terms of geographic locations and the traffic corridors which exist within areas. There are two reasons for this approach: first it simplifies the arrangements for teachers' to visit the families in their groups and, second, it facilitates the formation of SPAN Groups. (These groups are discussed later in this report.)

The unit-based teacher, all of whom are professionally trained specialists in early childhood education, initiates contact by way of a personal letter to both child and parents. All teachers send a photograph of themselves and invite the child to mail a photograph in return. Parents are also requested to complete an initial information sheet which provides the teacher with background information about brothers and sisters, parent interests, and the community in which the child lives. Teachers also begin to put parents and children in touch with others in the same geographic areas who are also enrolled in the program.

One of the chief responsibilities of the unit-based teacher is to establish rapport with the parent-teacher and the child. It is also the teacher's task to guide parents' selection of specific activities from the core program which best meet the needs of the individual child. As the development of an individualized program in most instances calls for the provision of additional supplementary materials, it is the unit-based teachers responsibility to select, or develop, such materials.

In the majority of instances it is a parent, generally the mother, who implements the Pre-School Correspondence Program in the home (Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975). Thus the parent-teacher is primarily responsible for directing the day-by-day activities of the child. Although parents perform a whole range of teaching functions in the course of bringing up their own children, they often express some anxieties about coping with the more structured task of teaching their children in the formal sense. Hence a major assumption underlying the program materials and the procedures, is that as much attention be paid to the development of parent confidence and guidance as to the development of materials for children.

Segments are dispatched automatically and teachers respond as materials and information is returned. Important in this regard is the Teacher Information Sheet. This was developed in order to gather developmental information, an indication of progress and the reactions of both the parent and child to the segment. It was anticipated that such information would provide teachers with a basis upon which to develop a more individualized program. For example, by knowing a child's particular interest, a teacher could provide relevant materials such as books or pictures, in order to extend the child's knowledge in that area. Similarly, where a child was experiencing some difficulty it was envisaged that a teacher could discuss the problem with the parent by means of audio tape or letter, and make suggestions for handling the situation.

It was hoped that such methods of communication would facilitate the individualization of the P.S.C.P. However, it was realized by the program developers that such a program depended on the willingness of the parents to actively participate by presenting the program to their child on some regular basis and by providing teachers with information on their child's progress. It was also assumed that teachers would be able to individualize the program on the basis of such information. Thus considerable effort was directed to the development of the Teacher Information Sheet but with only partial success (McGaw, Ashby, Grant, 1975).

The fostering of close personal relationships between parents and children and their teachers is an essential part of the P.S.C.P. In 1974 personalized tapes were trialled in addition to letters as a method of communication. As these were well received, they were used extensively by all parties in the 1975 program. Those families who had no access to a cassette recorder/player, were encouraged to purchase one with the Australian Government's remote area allowance of $120, payable to all families enrolled in the P.S.C.P. (Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975).

The individualizing of the program relied very heavily upon the capacity of the unit-based teacher. It was her responsibility to help the parent master the format and the spirit of the program, answer questions and queries and provide additional materials of particular benefit and interest to the child and parent. However, certain resources were available for the teacher to call upon. The Child and Parent Lending Library is an example. Books, cassette tapes, film strips and posters and picture collections were available for borrowing. In general teachers made the selections but requests were encouraged. A Toy Lending Library was available for children to borrow various types of manipulative and other equipment. The items available included those which families would not normally purchase, being either too expensive or holding only short-term interest for some children.

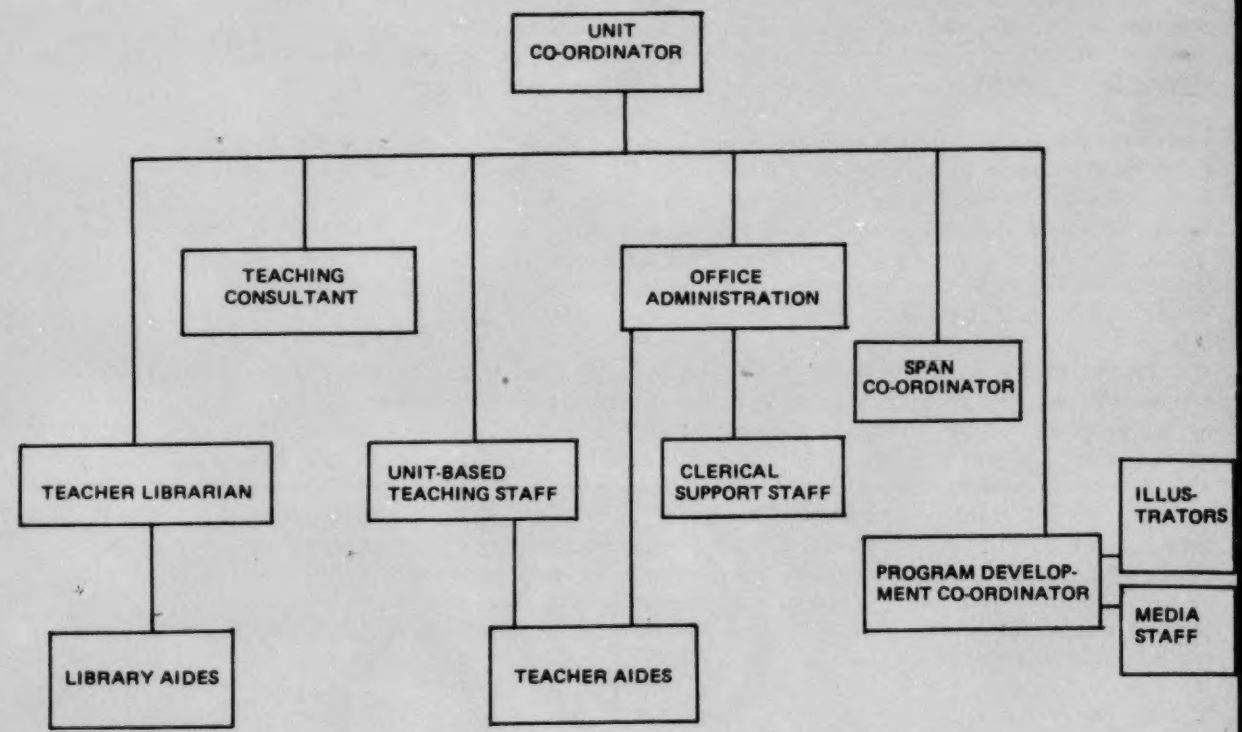
In addition to these services, all children enrolled in the P.S.C.P. received a basic equipment kit. This contained paper, glue, paste, scissors, paints, brushes, crayons, clay, magnifying glass and magnets. These represented items that often could not be purchased in small rural centres. Also parents received a copy of the "Resource Book for Parents" which was a well illustrated compendium concerned with ways to set up simple outdoor play areas, uses of various items of junk and of waste materials for learning and many suggestions for undertaking interesting activities indoors and outdoors.
(See Appendix III for sample pages.)

All of these provisions were aimed at ensuring that regardless of economic circumstances, or the degree of isolation or remoteness, each family would have access to a rich range of resources to conduct teaching within the home.

Unit Organization

In addition to the responsibilities associated with interacting with parents and children, each unit-based teacher was also assigned to a functional team within the unit. Before examining these teams it is necessary to consider the administrative structure of the unit.

Figure 1: Pre-School Correspondence Unit: Administrative Structure. (February, 1975.)



Overall management of the Pre-School Correspondence Unit is conducted by the Co-Ordinator. (See Figure 1) The Co-Ordinator was responsible for all the internal decisions and with making recommendations for the approval of policy, expenditure and all related matters to the Director of Pre-School Education. Figure 1 sets out the structure of the unit. The Teacher Librarian was responsible for the organization of all book and non-book resources for teachers, and for children and parents. The Teacher Consultant was responsible for advising and guiding teachers in their programming for individual children and parents comprising their class. The Office Administrator was responsible for all matters related to administration such as assigning work to the clerical staff and generally overviewing the work of teacher aides. The Program Development Team Co-Ordinator overviewed all work related to the development of program materials including the production of media materials. The SPAN co-ordinator organized all work related to the SPAN groups. (See Page 33)

The various functional teams that operated within the Unit are set out in Figure 2. In these groups teachers played little part in the administrative Team. Further the Program Development Team was so established that there were a number of teachers who had no teaching responsibilities (i.e. had no children allocated to them) but rather worked full-time in the area of materials and developed as planners and writers. As can be seen from both Figures 1 and 2, there were strong links between the Program Development Team and the Illustrating and Media Teams.

Figure 2: Pre-School Correspondence Unit: Functional Groups (February 1975.)

I	II	III
Developmental Team Planning, researching, selecting and writing of 'core' program materials and related publications (e.g. "Contact"). Solicits and undertakes forward planning of all P.S.C.P. materials.	**Illustrating Team** Collaborates closely with Developmental Team on layout and illustrating of all materials. Liaises with printers.	**Media Team** Selects materials (Music, songs, poem, stories) prepares scripts and records material for tapes. Liaises with producers and overviews production and purchasing of tapes.
IV	V	
SPAN Team Assists parents in establishing SPAN groups. Plans and conducts Parent Workshops. Plans preparation of support materials and the provision of equipment. Liaises closely with unit-based teachers and regional Pre-School personnel.	**Library and Resource Team** Plans the acquisition of all book and non-book library materials. Organizes the lending of book and other materials to children and teachers responsible for the collection of resource materials for teachers.	**Administrative Team** Processes all applications for enrolments. Undertakes all ordering of materials and supplies. Makes travel arrangements for teachers' visits to families. Supervises dispatch of materials etc. Provides support for all teachers and teams.

Accepting the aspirations of the program developers, it is possible to discern from Figures 1 and 2 a potential problem. The Developmental Team is quite obviously a strategically important element within the total structure. It is this group which prepares the materials which go to make up the program. Some teachers participate in this work, in addition to being responsible for a group of children, while others do not. Clearly, in this structure there is the possibility of some teachers being more *au fait* with the program's intentions than others; of some teachers being more able to offer further suggestions to parents and assist with program individualization.

SPAN Play Groups

Another major thrust of the 1975 program was the development of parent organized play groups which were called SPAN groups. The formation of these groups was encouraged amongst parents who lived in reasonable travelling distance to one another. This was seen as an extension of the P.S.C.P. into those aspects of development such as socialization and group activities which could not be achieved through a correspondence program. It was envisaged that numbers of the families enrolled in the program might meet together, either in the home of one of the families or at some other central meeting point every two weeks or so. It was felt that such meetings would provide children with opportunities for play with peers as well as giving parents a chance to meet together to discuss the program and share ideas. SPAN groups were seen as parent self-help groups which could benefit all children in the family as well as the adult. Groups were seen as ranging in size from about 4–5 families through to 10–12 families.

The formation of SPAN groups was encouraged by teachers who provided parents with the names of other families enrolled in the P.S.C.P. who lived in the district, and forwarded specifically prepared materials on ways of establishing and running such groups. (See Appendix X) Among the materials sent to those parents establishing SPAN groups was a series of six cassette tapes. These tapes provide parents with an introduction to movement and music activities as well as providing the children with a number of tapes to which they can listen during the SPAN playgroup sessions. As well as the SPAN tapes, several books and leaflets are available for suggesting certain physical and cognitivie activities.

The actual establishment and functioning of a particular group was the responsibility of the parents concerned. Information concerning SPAN groups is relayed to the regional based advisory teams (See Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975), which provide support service to all Pre-School Centres within their Educational Region. These advisory teachers who make up the teams include visits to SPAN groups as part of their duties and provide guidance and assistance to parents on an "as-required" basis.

A kit of basic play equipment is also provided to each group, although the amount of materials included varies in accordance with the size of the group. Various manipulative materials, construction sets, cognitive games (i.e. sorting, matching, classifying tasks, etc.) and musical instruments are included. These materials are returned by the group at the end of each year. In addition various expendable materials such as paper, paints and glue are also provided.

Parent workshops covering aspects of the setting up and organization of groups, and the conduct of SPAN group sessions were instituted. Parents wishing to participate in the establishment of SPAN groups were assisted to attend the workshops which were conducted in regional centres and generally lasted three days.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The implementation of the program provided a unique opportunity to conduct an action orientated research evaluation project. It was recognized from the commencement of planning the P.S.C.P. that new ground was being broken and that this presented a unique opportunity to evaluate the program. Thus, a research element was seen as an integral component of the operation. It was envisaged that such research and evaluation might be concerned with investigating all aspects of the P.S.C.P., including the organization of the Pre-School Correspondence Unit, as outlined in the preceding sections. While the initial thrust would be largely towards formative evaluation, and thereby provide a basis on which modifications in both materials and procedures might be introduced, the evaluation was also envisaged as having a summative component in order to provide a basis for judgement of the P.S.C.P. by others interested in adoption or adaptation of all or part of it.

Three specific outcomes of this approach were identified:

(i) soundly based modifications to the services offered – both in terms of their substance and their mode of integration and delivery;

(ii) data on which others could judge the appropriateness for adoption of all or parts of the P.S.C.P.;

(iii) development of an evaluation methodology appropriate for the study of new program thrusts such as that provided by the P.S.C.P.

Drawing on the description of the P.S.C.P. provided earlier in this report, it is possible to conceptualize the program in terms of two networks.

Figure 3: P.S.C.P. Basic Network of Elements

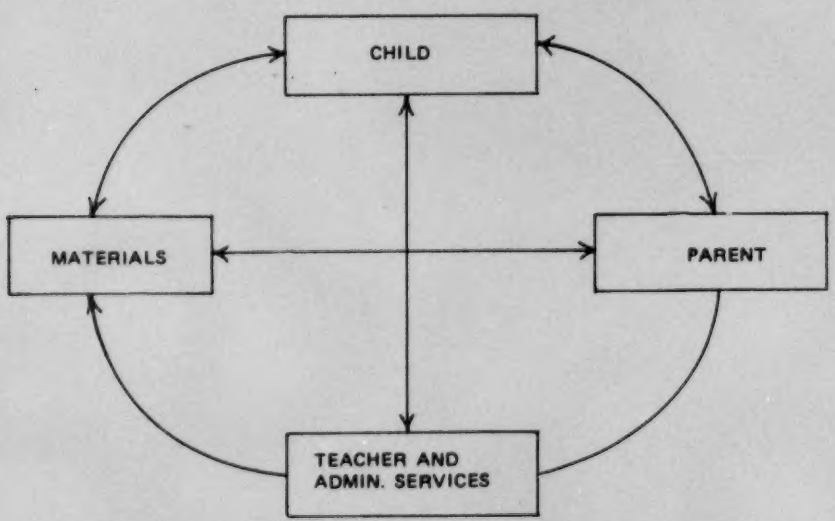
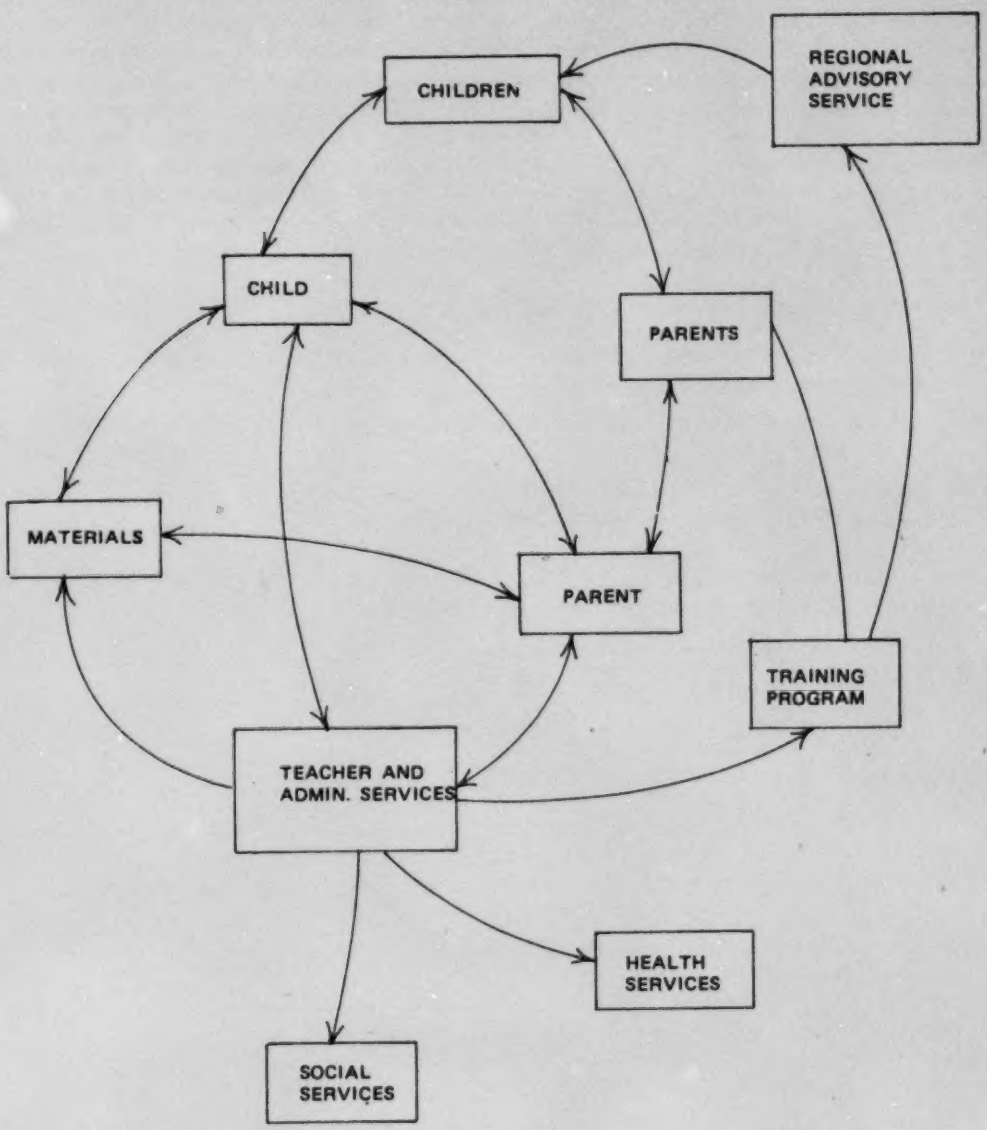


Figure 3 depicts the primary network of elements involved in the program and indicates the relationships between elements to be investigated.

Figure 4 depicts the extended network which would result following the introduction of SPAN groups and the provision of parent workshops. Further Figure 4 indicates the relationships between elements that would represent the full development of the original concept of the P.S.C.P.

Figure 4: P.S.C.P. Elaborated Network of Elements



It should be noted that two elements depicted in Figure 4, Social Services and Health Services, have not been discussed in the preceding parts of the report. Both of these issues concern the pre-school program for isolated children and the development of family support systems. While these particular matters fall outside the ambit of the Department of Education, they have been included in the diagram because the intent of the program developers was to facilitate some overall co-ordination with such services.

Evaluation of this program thereby necessitated the investigation of the key elements as identified in Figures 3 and 4, namely:

Children
Parents
Teachers
P.S.C.P. materials
SPAN playgroups and SPAN workshops
Auxiliary services, e.g., regional advisory service.

The major thrusts of the evaluation project were designed to furnish needed information on each of the above program aspects such as:

- demographic details of the enrolled P.S.C.P. population of children and their families, and the program's place in Queensland's educational system.
- description of the aims and organization of the P.S.C.P. in relation to the broader system of pre-school education.
- the degree of individualization of the program materials through an analysis of the personal communications between parents-teachers-children through letters, tapes, and visits.
- parents' views of the program and of their interactions with teachers, and their perceptions of their own role and that of teachers and children.
- Teachers perceptions of the program and its operation and of their own role as well as the role of parents.
- description of the objectives, organization and operation of parent-run SPAN playgroups, parents' reactions to their roles within them, and an evaluation of SPAN parent workshops.
- description and judgement of program curricula materials by a panel of curricula and early childhood experts who had no connection with the program.
- cost benefit analysis of the total program.
- background information on the home teaching process, parents' teaching role, aspects of program presentation, educational attitudes, child-rearing practices, and
- analysis of parents' teaching strategies during selected tasks i.e. the transactional process of mother-child interaction in the home situation.

Findings of the project shall be released in a series of research reports.

APPENDIX I

INITIAL STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE P.S.C.P.

(Reproduced from Harley, 1974)

1. That the program should evolve from the specific needs of children with particular consideration being given to:
   - geographical isolation and environmental conditions
   - the variability of socio-economic circumstances
   - ethnic or cultural factors
   - any special needs of individual children participating in the program (e.g. medical, sensory, etc.)

2. That the program provide necessary early learning experiences to assist children in achieving their optimum level of development. Such learning was seen as including experiences directed towards Language Arts and Literature, Creative Expression, concepts in Mathematics, Social and Physical Science and Motor Skill Development.

   Basic to both of these aims, however, was the underlying requirement that learning should proceed, as far as possible, on the basis of the child's direct involvement with appropriate concrete materials, in relevant activities, and in interaction on a one to one basis with the 'parent-teacher'.

   Implicit within this requirement for learning were two further objectives

   (a) That parents come to perform the role of teacher

   (b) That materials be developed in such a way that parents are able to follow the program objectives and implement the appropriate activities.

   Such development requires that the parent's own level of education be regarded as an important variable.

A number of further statements then developed which represented means of facilitating the achievement of the central objectives. They were stated as follows:

3. That by the use of the media (custom produced Cassette Tapes, Australian Broadcasting Commission radio broadcasts and possibly a pre-school of the Air Service) more direct communication could be made between teachers, children and parents in the educational process – a factor all important in the early education of the child.

4. That parents furnish 'feedback of information' requested by the teaching staff to assist in individually programming for children and indicating accents for further programming by the teachers of the developmental team. In addition, that means be evolved to enable children to provide some form of feedback directly to the teachers concerned.

5. That an active 'parent education' program be inbuilt as part of the learning process, and that parents be encouraged to communicate both with teachers and one another, and in so doing, benefit from a sharing of experiences.

6. That the establishment of auxillary services –

   e.g. Children's–Parents' Lending Library
   Equipment Library (including manipulative and cognitive materials)
   Equipment Kits (basic functional materials)

   would provide enrichment to the basic correspondence program.

   That procedures be devised to enable teachers to communicate directly with children and parents through visits to various centralized areas throughout the State, on an annual or more frequent basis.

APPENDIX II

CONTACT

The Contact information booklet is distributed to all parents as a means of informal contact from the pre-school correspondence teachers. Contact is not sent as part of the Segment Booklets, but separately each month during the teaching year. Appendix II comprises a selection of information from the Contact news sheet.

contact

PROVISIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Almost every profession uses jargon. Education is no exception. Jargon provides a type of shorthand for discussing various topics and subjects. The worst form of jargon is the use of initials. Unless one knows what the initials stand for there is virtually no way of understanding what is being talked about. However, there are other forms of jargon. One of these is the labels that we apply to various institutions.

A good example of this is the way terms such as kindergarten, pre-school and playgroup are used. Often parents become very confused by all of these terms, and with good reason. Often I get very confused myself. Therefore, it might be of assistance to try and clarify the meanings of various terms as they apply in Queensland.

KINDERGARTEN

This term is used in a wide variety of ways. In some States the very first class a child enters in the primary schools is called "Kindergarten". In Queensland "Kindergarten" refers to a community run centre which caters for children aged 3-5 years. In general community centres provide "full day" programs (9.00 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.) with older children attending 3 days per week and younger children attending two.

PRE-SCHOOLS

This term refers to centres established and operated by the Department of Education. Pre-Schools cater only for children aged 4-5 years. Each child attends five, half day sessions per week (i.e. either 9.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. or 12.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.). However, in some country areas where children have to travel on school transport, attendance is for 5 school days (i.e. 9.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.) per fortnight. Pre-Schools are associated with Primary Schools (although the pre-school is not counted as part of the Primary School) and close co-operation between pre-school and infant teachers in the curriculum area is expected.

EARLY EDUCATION CLASSES

In many areas the local primary school has only a small enrolment and hence only relatively few 4-5 year old children in any one year. One particular group of small schools known as Class IV Schools has seen the development of Early Education Classes.

Class IV schools have total enrolments of between 35-100 children. On average the number of children entering Grade One (or Year One, as it is now called) is about 10 children. Of course there is wide variation between both schools and between enrolments each year.

In Early Education Classes specially trained teachers work with both pre-school and grade one children, although in some schools because of small numbers, grade two children may also be included in the group. The pre-school children, however, only attend on either a half-day or every alternate day for the whole day the same as children in pre-school centres.

PLAYGROUPS

These include a very wide range of set-ups. In general a Playgroup consists of a group of children who attend a group session with their parents up to three times per week. Sessions are conducted in a variety of places, including Halls, Pre-Schools and Kindergartens. Playgroups are primarily of a self-help nature and may involve children from about 2½ years of age. In general, older children (i.e. 4-5 year olds) attend Pre-Schools or Kinder-

gartens. Playgroups do not employ teachers although some parents may have been teachers. Parents take the responsibility for organizing playgroup sessions.

SPAN GROUPS

These are very much modelled on playgroups except that Span Groups are formed from a core of 4-5 year old children enrolled in the Pre-School Correspondence Program. Younger and sometimes older children may attend these groups also, depending on the commitments of parents.

Span groups are formed and organized by parents. They are informal play sessions made up of small groups of children and parents. Parents are required to be present at each session their child attends. Help and support in running these groups is provided by teachers at the Pre-School Correspondence Unit and the Pre-School Advisory staff in the Regional Educational areas. In general, Span groups meet only once a week, although in some areas meetings are less frequent because of the distances parents have to travel.

Perhaps one major difference is the extent to which Pre-Schools, Early Education Classes and Span groups are seen as one phase in the continuing education of the child. Extensive co-operation between pre-school teachers and teachers in the lower primary school is an essential feature of pre-schooling in Queensland. Because community kindergartens and playgroups are quite separate from the school system a high degree of co-operation and co-ordination is often difficult to achieve.

Obviously there are some differences in organization and the ages of children catered for in the various set-ups. However, there are also very strong similarities: all types of early childhood education programs are very concerned with helping each child to develop at his or her own rate. Also all types of early childhood education schemes place a high priority on the involvement of parents.

Gerald F. Ashby – Director of Pre-School Education.

OUT AND ABOUT

SPECTRUM TOYS
The Village Shopping Centre
Whitfield, Cairns, Qld. 4870
Phone: 53 3085

Mrs. Naomi Wilson is the enthusiastic owner of this extremely well stocked shop. She tries to keep abreast with the latest educational equipment and caters for age groups ranging from babies to early primary children. However, she specialises in Pre-School equipment and carries a large range of Pre-School educational toys. Spectrum displays also a children's book section as well as parents and teachers' literature dealing with early childhood education. Records and art supplies are also available. Mrs. Wilson's genuine interest in the isolated family is evident by her willingness to handle mail orders – so if you can't get in to browse around, write. Mrs. Wilson is frequently arranging displays in the Cairns area, and could perhaps be approached to arrange a display for a Span group, provided there is sufficient interest.

o o o

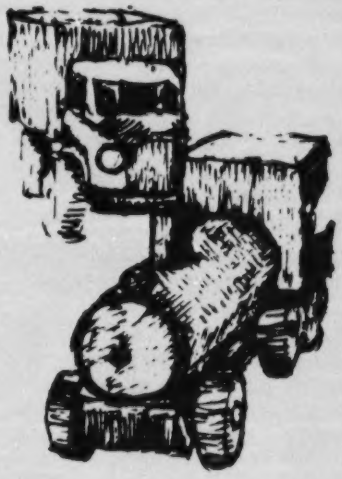
WALKER'S BOOKSHOP
Lake Street, Cairns, Qld. 4870
Phone: 51 2410

This is a general book store. However, they offer a large range of children's books – both traditional and new publications. A mail order service is available from this store.

o o o

Mr. D. Brown, 7 Mary Street, Malanda. Phone: 96 5164

Mr. David Brown makes some delightful, very solid wooden toys, which would be very suitable for span groups or individual Pre-Schoolers. I was particularly impressed with his "animal puzzles" which will enchant the whole family. His wheeltoys are trucks, graders, cars, aeroplanes, ships etc. They are well-designed and sturdy – suitable extras for block play. All his toys are reasonably priced.



SPAN – A CLOSER LOOK

In many parts of Queensland small groups of adults and children are meeting together regularly in Span Playgroups. Forty-six such groups are now operating and these involve children enrolled on the Pre-School Correspondence Program, other pre-school children within the area, their brothers, sisters and parents. By meeting together at these informal play sessions, parents are giving their children the opportunity for social contact with other children. Choosing a venue for Span Group meetings can be difficult particularly if families have long distances to travel. Lack of facilities can pose problems too. Here are some comments from several Span Groups telling how they overcome this problem.

o *Some families come from way out on stations as well as town. We are very fortunate to be able to use the Community Hall for our Span Group and we all have a marvellous time. Last years Pre-Schoolers from our Span Group settled into school without any trouble, which must prove how beneficial it is.*

o *Our group meets once a month. There are 4 families concerned and each mother takes a turn at holding the Span Session at her home. After each session we discuss the planning for the following session and decide at whose house we will meet. This mother is then responsible for the setting up of the equipment we have chosen to use and fills in the diary at the end of the day. This friendly relaxed atmosphere enables us all to feel at home – in fact even the dads can't help getting interested.*

o *The Convent School has made a room permanently available to us and so no problems are experienced with packing up materials or storage and the room is ideally situated near taps, toilets and the outdoor play area.*

SPAN PARENT WORKSHOPS

During March and April 55 mothers from many Span Groups attended 3 day Span Parent Workshops in Toowoomba, Maryborough, Rockhampton and Townsville. The workshops gave mothers, teachers from the Pre-School Correspondence Unit, Regional Directors and Advisory Teachers from each area the chance to meet together to talk over ways of working with children during Span Playgroup sessions.

Some of the topics discussed were – *How Children Learn, Techniques to Help Guide the Learning Process, Discipline, Parents as Teachers and Understanding and Channelling Children's Behaviour.*

Mothers visited playgroups and Pre-School Centres to see other mothers and teachers working with pre-school children and they watched several films. Although the three days were hectic most mothers stood the pace well and those fired with enthusiasm even carried on discussions and problem solving sessions into the early hours of the morning!

As one mother exclaimed, "I can't wait to get back to the Mums in our Span Group to talk over all these ideas. I'm sure we can really get our Group going."

AROUND THE UNIT

From Cherie to the children . . .

Hullo there. Now you'll all know what I look like. You know already that I live in the city, but you don't know I've got two friendly little cats. I love animals and wish I could live in the country with lots of pets.

I look forward to talking with you each month, and hope you have fun playing the tapes.

Bye-bye for now.

TO THE EDITOR

We sent down to *Spectrum* in Cairns for extra things. They sent a number symbol puzzle called *Simplex Cipher Association Board* which I think is very good. I thought you might pass the name onto any of the other ladies. Price is $8.40 here but well worth it.

Mother from Cooktown.

We have hauled an old tree trunk into the yard and both girls enjoy climbing along it. It was quite an excursion finding the tree, watching it cut down and hauled home behind the tractor. Isn't it unusual how simple things give such enjoyment.

Mother from Wyandra

With a young family who rely on parents to teach and show them most things ones own special "hobbies" must be put aside. Guess our hobby could be learning to be young again. We do enjoy this.

Mother from Mingela

TO MAKE A PUMPKIN STALK TRUMPET

1. Cut a pumpkin stalk with leaf attached.

2. Trim off the leaf being careful not to make any hole at the end.

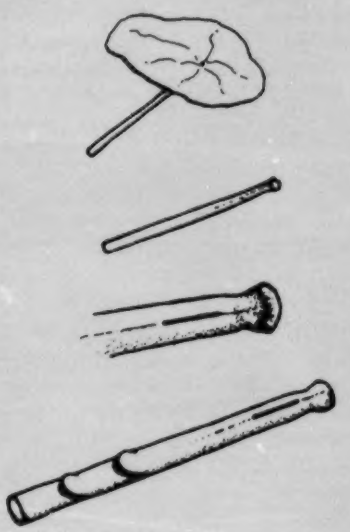
3. Make a slit with a knife in the natural dip-line near the end.

4. Place your mouth so it covers the slit and blow. If it doesn't work straight off you might need to widen the slit a bit. Don't make it too wide though!

5. To make different notes cut diagonal slits as in diagram.

Thick large stalks make deep tones. Thinner ones are higher.

R.S. McCosker
Condamine



A Water Slide – just a big sheet of plastic out on the lawn, with a hose or spray on. Certainly a great outdoors game for hot weather! Slide is about 15ft. long!

This year, I am using tins with good lids (e.g. sunshine milk tins) to make up the paint in. Not too much at a time, but it does mean that usually I have some ready when painting is required. (We have powdered milk and I find these tins good.)

Mrs. Turner, Charleville area

I have read through all the papers that were sent to Michael though I had not started him on the lessons as instructed. I thought the idea of having a week or two just introducing the program before starting on Unit 1 a very good idea. It gives the mother time to sort out what has to be done and to become familiar with the different types of activities and it gives the mother a bit of time to become more confident that she can do what the pre-school expects her to do.

Mrs. Conaghan, Marlborough

The rest of this painting is on the front of my freezer – it makes a good easel – but oh what a mess – thank heavens for Jiff.

Mother from Woodstock

A GOOD IDEA

DOUGH COOKIE SHAPES

1 cup self-raising flour
1 tablesp. sugar

Add milk to make a firm dough

Knead, roll out, use cutters or make into shapes by hand

Heat oil in frypan, cook shapes, drain on absorbent paper

Spread lightly with syrup, treacle or honey . . . and you have a playdough that's good enough to eat!

APPENDIX III

RESOURCE BOOK

The Resource Book for Parents is composed of six elements, each of which is designed to highlight the pre-school child's physical and mental development. The two elements presented here include physical growth and mathematical concepts which are designed to instruct the parent in developing the child's skills in understanding the subject matter. The physical growth encourages both indoor and outdoor activity in a range of tasks which facilitate free play and manual dexterity. Mathematical concepts utilize a more complex range of the child's knowledge. The fundamental concepts are explained, diagrammatically represented and followed up by problem-solving tasks. These tasks are designed to test the child's comprehension of the lesson. This resource book is a comprehensive source of information which is sent to the parents once a year for continual reference.

resource book for parents

by Margaret Harley, Susan Inglis, Jan Ashe
illustrated by Andree Axelsen

00 31

CONTENTS

1 Physical Growth

2 Language

3 Creativity

4 The Five Senses

5 Mathematical Concepts

6 Problem Solving

Physical Growth

A child's physical growth develops at an incredible rate from babyhood to the age of six years. By the time a child is six he has developed control over his body, his muscles, his nervous system and his bones. He has developed co-ordination and agility and a sense of his own physical power.

Physical activity is developed through the play of the young child. Through play he explores his world and develops skill in using his body - climbing a ladder, undoing buttons, pouring water into a cup, balancing on a board. As a child masters one skill he tries more difficult skills and continues practicing whenever any opportunity occurs. In this way he becomes competent and in time develops confidence. Confidence in one area leads to confidence in others. It is important therefore, to provide a variety of play materials for the child to explore and manipulate, thus helping him to develop physical skills.

When introducing any activity to a child for the first time, keep the task simple. As the child masters the skill the task can be made more difficult.

e.g. Throwing a ball into a box - ball and box would be large and the child would stand close to the box.

Balancing on a board - the board would be low to the ground at first, then the height gradually increased.

Climbing a ladder - four rungs up the first time could be a great achievement.

Accept what your child can do. When he feels confident he will extend himself further and with encouragement and support gain in confidence and skill.

Before your child uses any play equipment help him check that it is always safe. Make sure a ladder is secure before climbing on it, look to see if anyone is coming before jumping from a box, swinging on a rope or sliding down a slide.

Four and five year olds need plenty of physical activity. The ideas suggested in this chapter should assist you in providing a more challenging physical environment for your child.

Water Sand and Earth Play

A corner of the garden can be used for digging, tunnelling or damming.

Provide: a spade strong enough to lift earth, a bucket, a hose and a strong box with a rope handle for pulling.
lengths of pipe, pieces of thick cardboard, wood, stones and rocks add interest.

If water is limited, half a bucket would do to provide a variety of texture.

Sand Play

Provide: a small spade or wooden spoon, containers for holding sand.
e.g. discarded cakетins, saucepans, kitchen colander, pieces of cardboard, lengths of wood, pipes for tunnels.

Pouring with Water and Sand

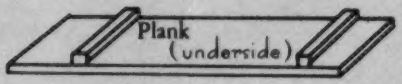
Provide: several bottles or containers which differ in size and shape, a bucket of water, a jug, and a funnel.

For added variety add a touch of colour to the water.
Use wide necked bottles at first. Extend this later to exclude the funnel and then provide narrow necked bottles.

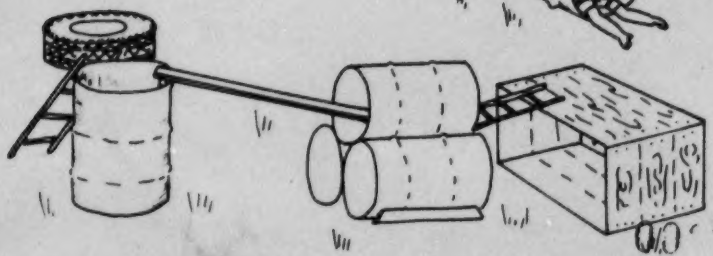
Fine muscular control is required for pouring water into narrow necked bottles or containers.

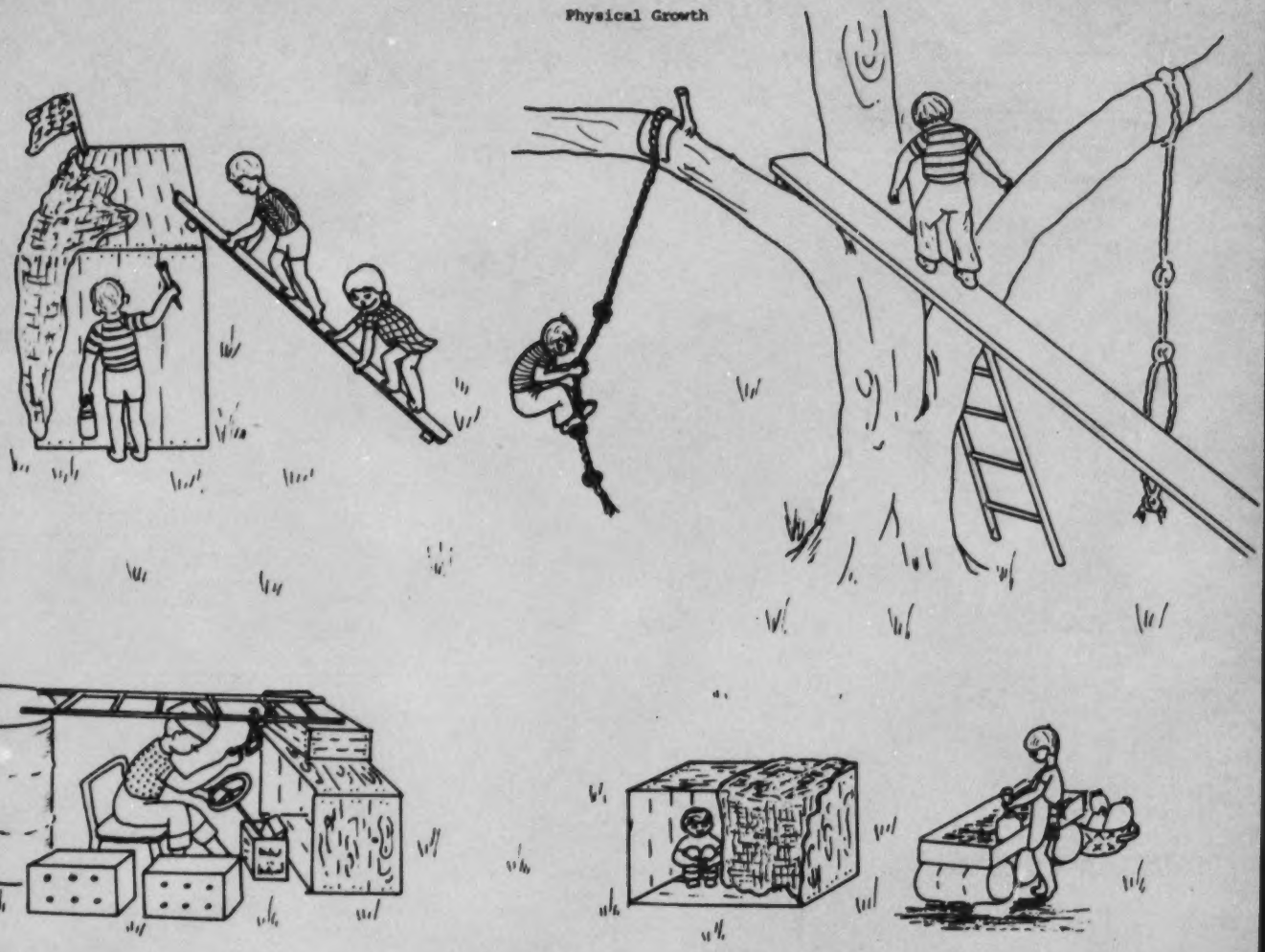
Fine sand can be used if water is limited or weather is too cold.

Ideas for Outdoor Equipment



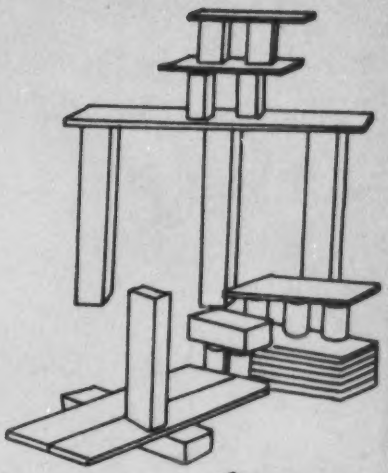
hook cleat onto box etc. for safety.



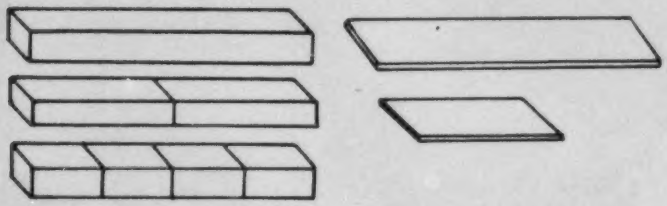


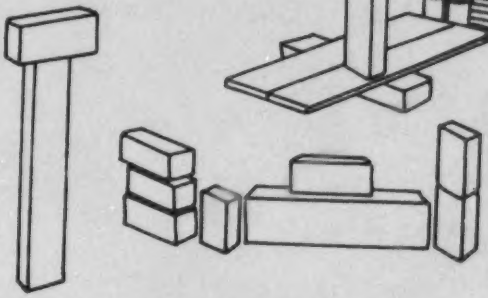
Working with Wood

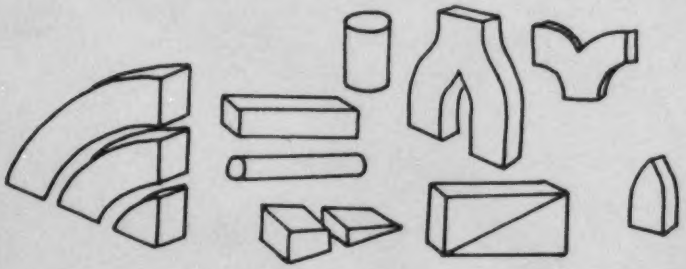
Packing cases and boxes - can be arranged in a variety of ways for crawling and balancing and making cubbies. Children enjoy moving boxes to arrange in their own way.

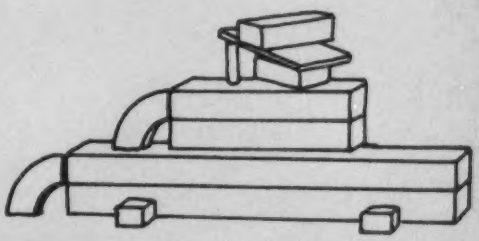


Building with blocks - Commercially made unit blocks give children many opportunities to practice physical and mathematical skills. As children handle the blocks they find many ways to use them - balancing one on top of another can be a difficult skill for a four year old.









Rhythm and Movement

Children enjoy and respond to rhythm. Jumping, hopping, leaping, are rhythmic movements pleasurable to children.

Body movements e.g. swinging, twisting, turning, bending and stretching are lots of fun too.

Listening to a record, a musical instrument or the radio gives children opportunities to respond to rhythm and gain muscular control through rhythmic movement.

Marching, galloping, skipping, swaying are all movements children can enjoy. Make opportunities for your child to hear various types of sounds and music. Encourage him to respond in a free and spontaneous way.

You could say - "How does the music make you feel?"
"How would you move to the rhythm?"
"Move quickly, slowly."

Making suggestions gives children opportunities to try moving in many ways and thus discover what they can do with their bodies.

e.g. - "How would you move when you are very tired?"
"Hop like a kangaroo."
"Curl up small."

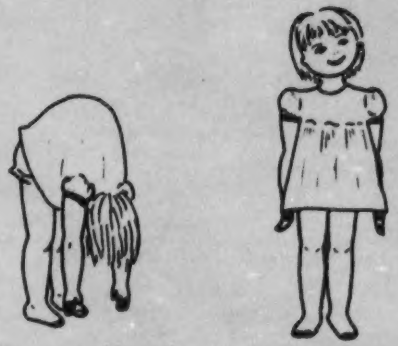
You will think of many others.

Games to Play

Flopsy Flora - opportunities to be floppy and stiff.
with two or more people

I'm just like Flopsy Flora
My doll that's made of rags
My arms go flop, my legs go flop
My head just wags and wags.

I'm just like Wooden William
Who stands up straight and tall
My arms and legs are wooden pegs
I can't move them at all.



Fingers and Hands

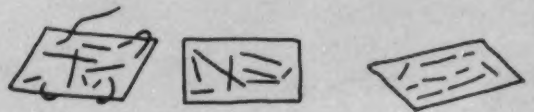
Fingerplays - action games using fingers in different ways. Moving one finger at a time helps develop muscular control.

Threading with a bodkin - using beads, buttons, macaroni, straws, or small pieces of alfoil rolled into cylinders.

Threading with a needle - is a more difficult skill when the child is required to make the hole in the material. Leaves, flowers, thin cardboard, paper, polystyrene and material provide a wide variety of textures and thickness for threading. Remember to tie wool, string or cotton used for the thread to the eye of the needle or bodkin.

See my fingers merrily dancing
(wiggle fingers)
Now they make a window frame
(make frame)
I peep through them and I see
(peep through)
Two little fingers wave to me
(wiggle little fingers)

Sewing - large needles with wool or thick thread. Use firm material or felt. Putting the needle in the top side, turning the material over and putting it in the same side is a hard skill to master.



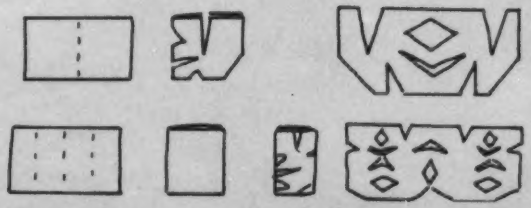
Cutting with Scissors - paper, material, cardboard, wool, plastic. Remember large pieces of paper are awkward to hold.

A child may need a lot of assistance at first when using scissors. He may need the paper held while he cuts. As he becomes more proficient with using scissors he will enjoy cutting around shapes and making his own shapes and patterns.

Paper Folding and Cutting

One paper fold - fold paper in half. Child cuts pieces out - unfolds to see pattern.

Two paper fold - fold paper in half, then half again. Paper is thick and more difficult to cut. Unfold to find pattern. Paper folding can be decorated with crayons, paint, material.



Mathematical Concepts

The development of mathematical concepts at the pre-school stage is part of a child's continued growth of language. Many children of this age already have an understanding of such words as larger; smaller; taller; shorter; more or less and the concepts these terms represent.

The pre-school child is involved in the mathematical concepts of size, mass, quantity, volume, number, shape, positional relationships, sets, time, money. These concepts develop naturally as the child explores his environment.

The natural environment, man made materials and play equipment will provide all the opportunities required in developing the pre-school child's mathematical concepts. The selection of materials, equipment and activities should be varied and initially the child should be free to select materials and activities for himself. In this way, a child can determine the activities with which he can cope and achieve success, and will naturally choose those which best suit his stage of development both physically and mentally.

The range of experience should include large toys, building blocks, wet and dry sand, water, clay, constructional toys, home corner, dressing up, painting, drawing, movement, music, poetry and story.

How are these concepts to be taught? Preferably not as separate subjects isolated from the child's play experiences, but integrated into play experiences, so that learning comes through the natural curiosity and experimentation on the part of the child.

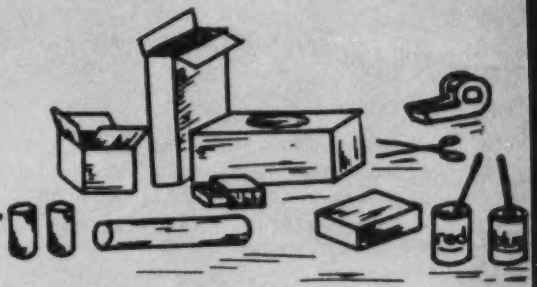
Size

Concepts of Size: big, bigger, biggest
small, smaller, smallest
smaller than, bigger than.

The following activities have been designed to help your child develop and use concepts related to size.

The terms 'big', 'bigger', can be learned through play. How? By using them naturally in conversations with your child as he plays with building blocks, 'lego sets', or similar construction materials.

Block Play



As he plays, you could ask him "Which is the biggest?"

"Which tower is the smallest?"
"Is this block smaller than that block?"
"Let's put them in a row from smallest to biggest."
"Can you put them in a row from smallest to biggest to make a staircase?"

Hint! If you don't have a set of building blocks, try making your own!
Collect a variety of cardboard packets and cartons in different sizes.
Tape down the lid with cello tape or masking tape.

Your child can paint them or decorate them by pasting on cut outs!

Another way to teach your child the concepts of size is to let him sort household articles or clothing.

A Pile of Clothes: Let your child help you sort a pile of clean clothes according to size: Socks, Handkerchiefs, Singlets, Shirts

Talk about the sizes of the articles as you sort.

"Which handkerchiefs are the biggest?"
"Who owns the smallest singlets?"
"Are your shirts bigger or smaller than Daddy's?"

Mass

Concepts of Mass: light, heavy, lighter, heavier, balance, mass, equal mass.

A child develops concepts of mass by actually handling items of different mass - some heavy, some light, some equal mass.

Putting away Groceries

Let your child watch and help you as you put away the groceries. Talk about their mass as you handle them.

"That big tin is heavier than the little tin."
"Those two packets have the same mass."
"Which of these two containers is lighter?"

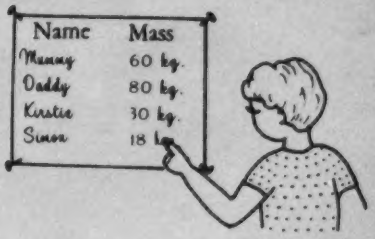
Weigh Yourself

If you have a set of bathroom scales, your child could find his mass.

Other family members could do this also.

Record the mass of each on a chart so the child can actually see that the family members are heavier than he is and some may be lighter than he is.

Don't forget to tell him what his mass is.



More Things to Weigh

If you have a set of kitchen scales, you and your child together could find the mass of .5kg sugar (1 lb) .5kg flour (1 lb) .5kg butter (1 lb) .5kg rice (1 lb)

Discuss with him the fact that although all the items come in different sized packages, they all have the same mass.

Try to provide him with some opportunities for using the scales for weighing different items for himself.

Quantity

Concepts of Quantity: few, many, several, more, less, same, different, most, least, none, equal.

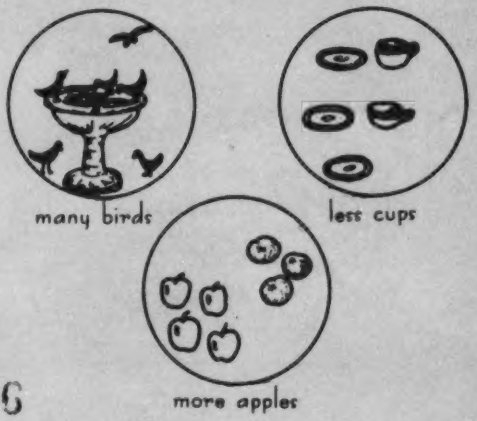
Sand Pit Play

A pile of sand and a variety of plastic containers (cups, icecream containers, detergent bottles cut to different sizes) tins, buckets, spades, spoon, scoops, ladles, a sieve and a funnel, will provide your child with first hand experiences of 'quantity' as he pours the sand from one container to another and fills the containers using a scoop, ladle or smaller tin. Talk to your child about what he is doing.

"How many tins of sand did you need to fill the bucket?"
"Let's count them together."
"Which container has the most sand?"
"Which container has the least sand?"
"Which container has none?"

"These two tins have the same amount of sand in them."
"They're equal."
"Does the blue tin have more or less sand than the red tin?"

You can also further your child's concept of quantity by conversation on almost any household topic.



"There are only a few apples left."
"Many birds came to eat the crumbs we left out for them."
"Several splashed in the bird bath."
"You drank the most milk at lunch time."
"This icecream tastes different from the last kind. It must be a different flavour."
"Are there more apples than oranges?"
"Are there less cups than saucers on the table?"
"That's right, there are the same number of cups and saucers."

Volume

Concepts of Volume: full, cup full, jug full, half full, empty, whole, great, small.

Water Play

An old tub or baby bath for water play plus a variety of containers for measuring and pouring, a jug, funnel and clear plastic tubing can assist your child in understanding the concept of volume.

Using the following terms as you play together.

"That container is <u>full</u>. It won't hold any more water."
"How many <u>cups full</u> did you need for a <u>jug full</u> of water?"
"That one is only <u>half full</u> and that tin is <u>empty</u>."

Cooking: As well as introducing the concept of mass, cooking also introduces children to the idea of volume as you follow a recipe together.
Allow your child to help measure out the ingredients.
Read him the recipe.
Show him the mass of the ingredients on the kitchen scales and tell him what they mean.
Talk about what you are doing.

"It says 113.9g (¼ lb) of butter - We'd better measure that on the <u>scales</u>."
"Here, you measure a <u>½ cup</u> of milk."
"Could you count three eggs and bring them from the fridge?"

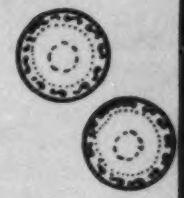
Morning Tea is a good time to demonstrate the concepts of division and fractions of volume.

Explain what you are doing.

"I've only <u>one</u> jug of milk and I need <u>three</u> glasses of milk."
"See! Now we have <u>three small glasses</u> of milk instead of <u>one big jug</u> of milk."

"Would you like to <u>share</u> my apple?"
"Let's cut it into <u>two</u> pieces."
"You can have <u>half</u> and I'll have half."

Number



Concepts of Number: Counting 1 - 10, one to one correspondence, recognising numbers, recognising zero, first, second, last, add to, take from, measurement.

Being able to count to ten does not necessarily mean that young children understand the concepts of ten i.e. of 10 objects.

As a parent you can help your child develop number concepts in a variety of ways. You can share everyday number experiences with him in the following ways.

While setting the table for dinner he can count the knives, forks, spoons, plates, cups.
Ask him to bring 2 cups from the cupboard.
When you unpack the groceries he can count the items you've bought.
When you pick some flowers he can count how many in the bunch.

Remember that, whenever you count, you should do it in terms of something. Count books, fence posts, birds on the fence. In this way, you'll help your child understand that numbers represent amounts. When he counts, he'll know what he's talking about.

Touch and Count

Lets count the spoons and find out how many there are.
One (touch it) two (as you touch the second) three (as you touch the third.)
There are three spoons.

Count different things - variety is important

Count: the buttons on your coat
the windows in the kitchen
the cushions in the lounge room
the chairs in the dining room
the taps in the bathroom
empty matchboxes
toys

Shape

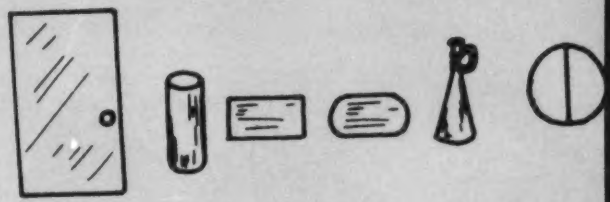
Concepts of Shape: square, rectangle, triangle, circle, cylinder, cone, pyramid, sphere.

Collect a variety of toys and containers in the following shapes: square, rectangle, triangle, circle, cylinder, sphere, cone, pyramid.

Allow your child to use these in a play situation and discuss the shapes with him.

"The bottom of your boat is a rectangle."
"The sail is a triangle."
"That wheel is a circle."

Comment on the shape of household articles:



"What shape is the table top?"
"That door is a rectangle."
"This cardboard roll is a cylinder."
"This table has a straight edge. But that table has a curved edge."
"Can you find something in the shape of a cone?"
"Yes the end of your toy trumpet is."
"These two half circles make a whole circle - look!"

Flannel Board Fun:

Cut out a variety of geometric shapes from scraps of felt.

Encourage your child to use the shapes on the Flannel Board.

Discuss with him the shapes he has used.

"Do you know what shape the roof of your house is?"

"Yes it's a triangle."

"Are there any rectangles in your picture?"

"Yes, the door is a rectangle and the windows are squares."

"Could you find a circle?" "Yes, that flower is a circle."

Money

A child learns the value of money by handling it and using it to 'buy' things.

Playing Shop

Children may be introduced to handling money by giving them small change when they play 'shop' or 'shopping'. If playing shop - mark the items with prices and take turns to be shopper and shopkeeper. Encourage him to count out correct change and 50¢ in small change. This will introduce him to the values of the various coins.

Shopping

On shopping excursions encourage your child to make small purchases and count the amount of change he receives. He'll quickly learn that if he hands over 10¢ for a 5¢ item he'll receive 5¢ change.

Money Game

Provide some 1¢ 2¢ 5¢ 10¢ 20¢ pieces. Ask him how many ways can he find to give you 10¢.

1 x 10¢ piece
2 x 5¢ pieces
5 x 2¢ pieces
10 x 1C pieces and so on.

Keep it simple to begin with and extend this idea to more complex combinations when he has grasped the basic oncepts.

The activities and ideas presented in this chapter have endeavoured to introduce your child to basic mathematical concepts.

We hope you will use it not only as a guide but as a starting point from which will evolve further learning experiences in mathematical concepts as you and your child play and learn together through exploration and discovery.

00 50 how many ways can you give me 10 cents ?

APPENDIX IV

SEGMENT BOOKLET

The Segment Booklet entitled 'Perception' is the fourth booklet which has been selected from a series of eight Segment Booklets. Five areas of perception are included in the text. These are visual, auditory, tactile, oral and olfactory perception. The following sections entitled, auditory and tactile perception are considered representative of all the segment material as are the ensuing follow-up tasks.

Segment 4

PERCEPTION

Visual

Auditory

Tactile

Oral

Olfactory

00 52

HOW TO BEGIN

READ THE FOLLOWING POINTS CAREFULLY AS THEY WILL ASSIST YOU IN UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PROCEED.

Segment 4 of the program is entitled Perception. It is divided into five sections.

Visual Perception	Sight
Auditory Perception	Sound
Tactile Perception	Touch and Feel
Oral Perception	Taste
Olfactory Perception	Smell

The ideas presented form a natural progression from those of the previous segments.

- Read through the content of the program yourself first.
- The booklet, "All Around You," in Segment 3 can be used as an introduction to Perception, as it relates equally well to either section.
- Present some activities from each of the five sections.

It is suggested this Segment extend over a period of four to six weeks.

PERCEPTION

Perception is the way in which we receive and interpret information. We use our "five senses" - sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, to help us in this process.

When a baby is born he begins immediately to receive information from the world around him through his "five senses". As he grows so does his ability to receive and interpret this information. It is therefore necessary to teach him specific perceptual skills which will assist him to benefit more fully from these experiences.

What a child 'takes in' from this world is largely determined by what is available and what perceptual skills he has developed for observing his surroundings.

Within *your* environment, what kinds of things and activities are there for your child to see, hear, touch, sense, experience and explore? Is there a wide variety of experiences which will help him to develop an awareness of colour, shape, size, texture, taste and smell?

These perceptual experiences are the basis of the intellectual area of development. Therefore a wide variety of experiences should be presented so that children have experiences in all areas of perception.

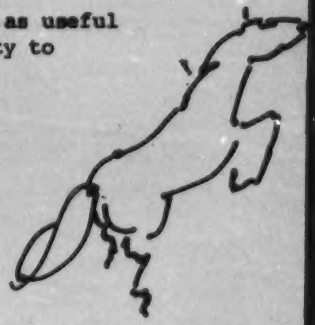
In this segment we offer ideas, suggestions and activities to assist your child to develop the perceptual skills which are essential for the child's adequate intellectual functioning.

AUDITORY PERCEPTION (sound)

We live in a world full of rich and varied sound - happy and sad; loud and soft; cheerful and warm; frightening and sometimes unexpected. Young children are often surrounded by an overwhelming array of sounds and need help in focusing their attention on specific aspects of sound. The ability to discriminate between different sounds requires good listening skills. These skills are essential as a foundation for effective speech.

In this section we have endeavoured to assist your child to develop an appreciation of the sounds found in speech, music and movement, and to become aware of differences in mood, pitch, and rhythm. We have also provided opportunities for him to respond through physical activity and creative expression.

The many aspects of auditory perception thus become a meaningful as well as useful part of the child's development and we hope you will take this opportunity to encourage your child to create sound and experiment with its effects.



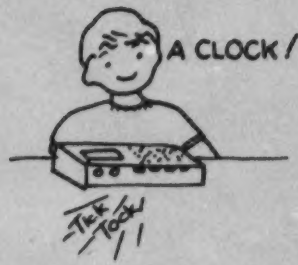
Auditory Perception

Taping Sounds

Materials: tape recorder

Procedure: Tape a variety of familiar sounds
e.g. voices, ticking of a clock, click of light switch, bouncing a ball, pounding a hammer, animal or bird call.

Can your child identify the sounds and voices on the tape?
Explain that different situations produce different sounds.
Even voices are different, and each person can be identified by his or her own voice.



What Do I Hear?

Procedure: Ask your child to listen with eyes closed as you make a sound - e.g. tearing paper, closing a door, walking across the room.
Ask your child to identify the sound. (Later, let your child have a turn making a sound, and you take a turn guessing.)

How Does it Sound?

Materials: opaque plastic detergent bottles or margarine containers
rice, gravel, beans, coins, nails, corks, sand, buttons, paper clips, bottle tops, macaroni.

Procedure: Help your child fill two of the containers about 1/3 full using the same material.
Tape the lid on the first one. Shake it, and ask your child to listen to the sound it makes.
Tape the lid on the second shaker. Listen, is it a different sound from the first?
Make a third shaker, using a different filling. See if your child can match the shakers that make the same sound.

Suggestion: What about grouping the shakers according to the sound each one makes?

e.g.	loud or soft	smooth
	high or low	rattling
	fast or slow	rushing

Music for Dancing

Materials: varieties of musical rhythms - e.g. Calypso, Greek, Eastern, Band, Country and Western, Pop.

Procedure: Play several selections, and ask your child to think about how the music makes him feel, and how it makes him want to move.

Fast Sounds; Slow Sounds

Materials: drum, or tapping stick, spoon, hand clapping, knuckles against the table

Procedure: Suggest the child try running or walking as the speed of the beat indicates.
Could he "jump" the number of beats e.g. 3 beats - 3 jumps.

Interesting Sounds

Procedure: Present some interesting sounds to your child, and ask him to move the way the sound makes him feel.
You can follow up this idea by discussing the sounds, and whether or not they were -

pleasant	frightening
exciting	busy
angry	interesting

Sounds -

pouring water from jug to glass	ice cubes tinkling
clicking your fingers	turning an egg beater
bacon sizzling	sound of a lighting engine
bouncing a ball	sawing wood

Auditory Perception

Ideas for Instruments

Provide the opportunity for your child to respond physically to contrasting sounds of simple musical instruments, you have made together this year.

Listening Without Seeing

You will need: Several homemade instruments e.g. drum, shaker and rhythm sticks.

Then: Ask your child to hide his eyes and listen to the sound you are making.

Can he identify the instrument you used?

Suggestion: Let your child choose the instrument and take a turn guessing yourself.

Another Listen and Do Game

Procedure: Play a simple rhythm on an instrument and give your child an instruction.

e.g. "When you hear the drum beat, stamp your feet."

"When you hear the shakers, try walking on tiptoes."

Hint:
1. Begin with two instruments only.
2. Your child might like to decide the accompanying actions.

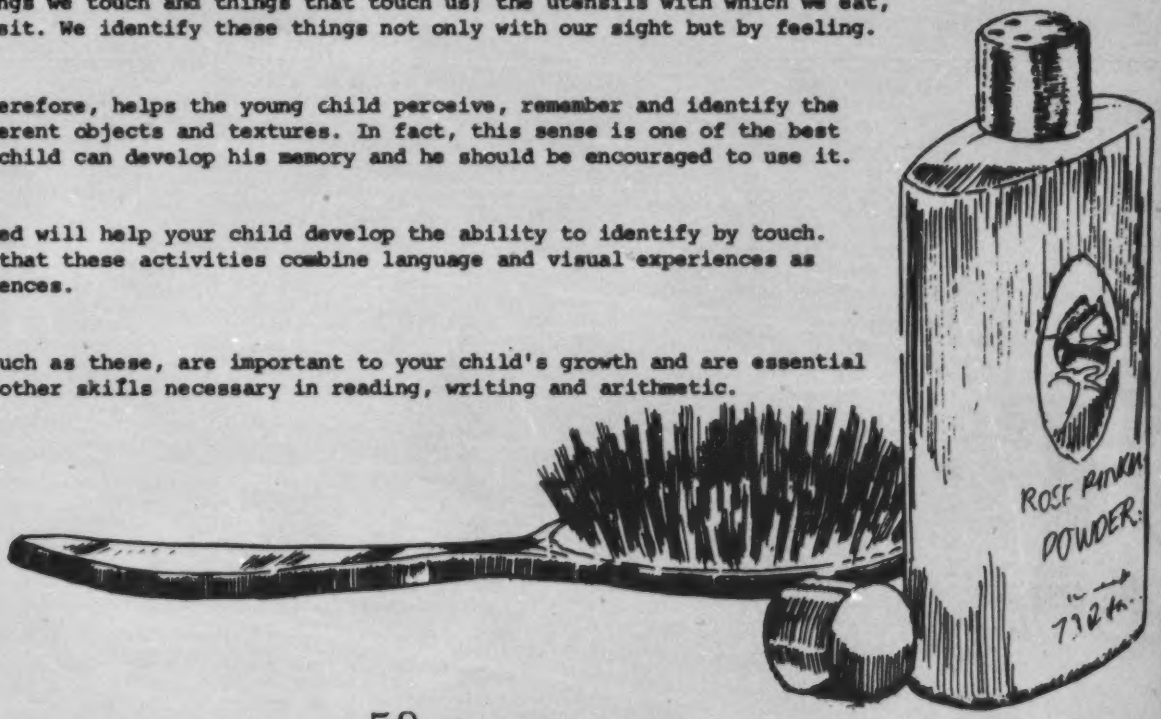
TACTILE PERCEPTION (touch and feel)

All around us are things we touch and things that touch us; the utensils with which we eat, the chair in which we sit. We identify these things not only with our sight but by feeling.

The sense of touch, therefore, helps the young child perceive, remember and identify the shape and feel of different objects and textures. In fact, this sense is one of the best ways in which a young child can develop his memory and he should be encouraged to use it.

The activities presented will help your child develop the ability to identify by touch. Often you will notice that these activities combine language and visual experiences as well as tactile experiences.

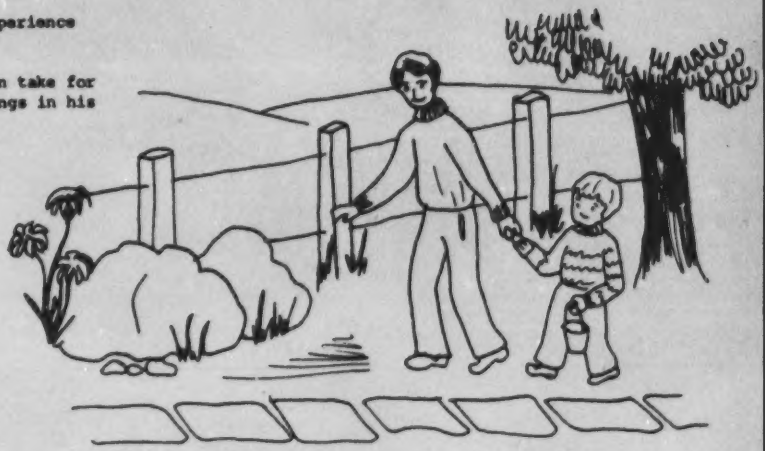
Combined experiences such as these, are important to your child's growth and are essential to the development of other skills necessary in reading, writing and arithmetic.



Tactile Perception

There are many opportunities during the day for your child to experience the sense of touch.

There are many things, both indoors and out, which young children take for granted. Encourage your child to become aware of the feel of things in his environment, and so further his understanding of them.



Awareness of Touch

Go for a walk outdoors:

Talk about the feel of:

leaves	sand
stones	moss
seeds	cement
grass	gravel
bark	sticks

Walk around inside the house:

Discuss the feel of:

rugs	thimble
pillow	spoon
clean sheets	wooden spoon
thick coffee mugs	apple
fine china	egg shell
fork	orange

Hint! Remember to use words which describe touch -

tickly grass	scratchy sandpaper	heavy stone
prickly mohair	spiky ice	light sponge
soft fur	round ball	dry (stale) bread
tacky toffee	snuggly bed	crisp sheets

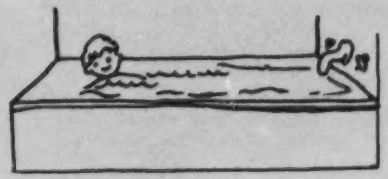
Ask your child to think of other "feeling" words.

Tactile Perception

When we think of "touch", we often think this refers only to what our hands touch. However, many parts of our body respond to touch.

Sometimes the <u>whole</u> of our body responds to touch:

e.g. water in the bath



Discuss with your child "how it feels" when he lies in the bath full of water.

Does it feel wet and soothing?

Does it feel light or heavy?

Discuss with your child the feel of clothes on the skin.

Clingy nylon socks.
Warm soft woollen jumpers.
Crinkly cotton pyjamas.
Smooth ironed cotton shirts
Loose cool dresses.

Sometimes only <u>one part</u> of the body is affected.

Discuss with your child how it feels to -

Walk on hot cement
(does it burn, sting his feet?)

Lean with his back to a tree
(is it rough, scratchy?)

Lie with his head on a pillow
(is it hard, soft, or lumpy?)

Tactile Perception

Roly Poly Game - distinguish between different textures.

Ask your child to roll on the following textures which can be found around the house, and discuss how it feels.

Perhaps: the carpet is soft, warm, prickly

Or: the lino is cool, smooth, hard

Perhaps: the grass is tickly, cool, springy

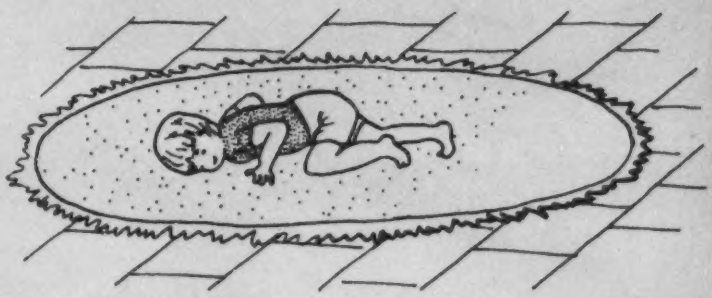
Or: the cement is hard, rough, cold

Tickly Face - identification by touch (face).

You will need: Materials of different textures, (with which your child is familiar) e.g. Sponge, aluminium foil, wool, face washer, corrugated cardboard.
A blindfold.

How to Play: Select three textures to begin with.
Show the child the textures you have chosen.
Blindfold him.
Say - e.g. "Can you tell me what I'm holding against your face?"
If he cannot identify the item ask *him* to hold it against his face.
How does it feel?

Rough? Crinkly? Soft?



Rough and Smooth - identify by touch, distinguish between textures.

Provide: assorted objects of rough and smooth textures
two boxes - one marked "rough", one "smooth"
blindfold

Then: Ask your child to sort the objects into the appropriate boxes.

Variation: The same activity may be used to give your child practice in discriminating between -

hard and soft
light and heavy
long and short

Alternative: The child could cut out pictures of rough and smooth objects from magazines, and sort these.

Tactile Perception

Texture Rubbings

Provide: Objects of different textures - e.g. coins, shells, cement, string, net, rubber mat, large leaves, brown paper or painting paper
thick crayon, pencil

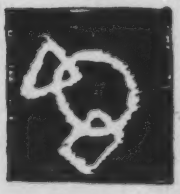
Procedure: Place paper over the object.
Ask your child to rub the pencil or crayon across the paper until the outline of the object is shown.

Suggestion: Sort the different surfaces into those found indoors and those outdoors.

Soap Painting - texture experiences

You need: a bar of soap
paint
small basin
boiling water

Then: Place the soap in the basin of boiling water.
When the soap has dissolved sufficiently (looks like jelly) add colour and mix.



Candle Painting

You need: household candle
paint

Then: Ask the child to draw his design using the candle. (apply thickly)
Paint over the drawing and ask him to feel the dry surface with his fingers.

Segment 4 entitled "Perception" has discussed the "Five Senses", in greater detail, giving suggestions for enriching experiences and activities to stimulate awareness in these areas.

The topics discussed included:-

Visual Perception	(sight)
Auditory Perception	(sound)
Tactile Perception	(feel and touch)
Oral Perception	(taste)
Olfactory Perception	(smell)

The Cassette Tape provides a further extension of the concepts presented in the Written Program. Encourage your child to listen and participate.

The concepts included in Segment 4 reinforce and extend those presented in earlier Segments of the Program.

As your child's experiences need further enriching as the year progresses, it is suggested that you continue to present and extend ideas and activities included in previous segments.

APPENDIX V

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK SHEETS

The first work sheet relating to the topic of "Perception", requires the child to accomplish three tasks. The task illustrated is the third of these, which requires the child to utilize his visual perception and find ten birds hidden in a drawing. The two other tasks, not shown in the Appendix, develop the child's comprehension in the visual perception of his household environment.

The second work sheet presents the child with four series of shapes, which are introduced a number of times in the Segment Booklet. The task requires the child to identify the one odd shape out of four.

The third work sheet develops the shape theme and requires the child to differentiate all those shapes which make up the clown.

QUEENSLAND STATE PRE-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

On the following pages are some activities relating to Perception

What is wrong? What other funny situations can your child think of?

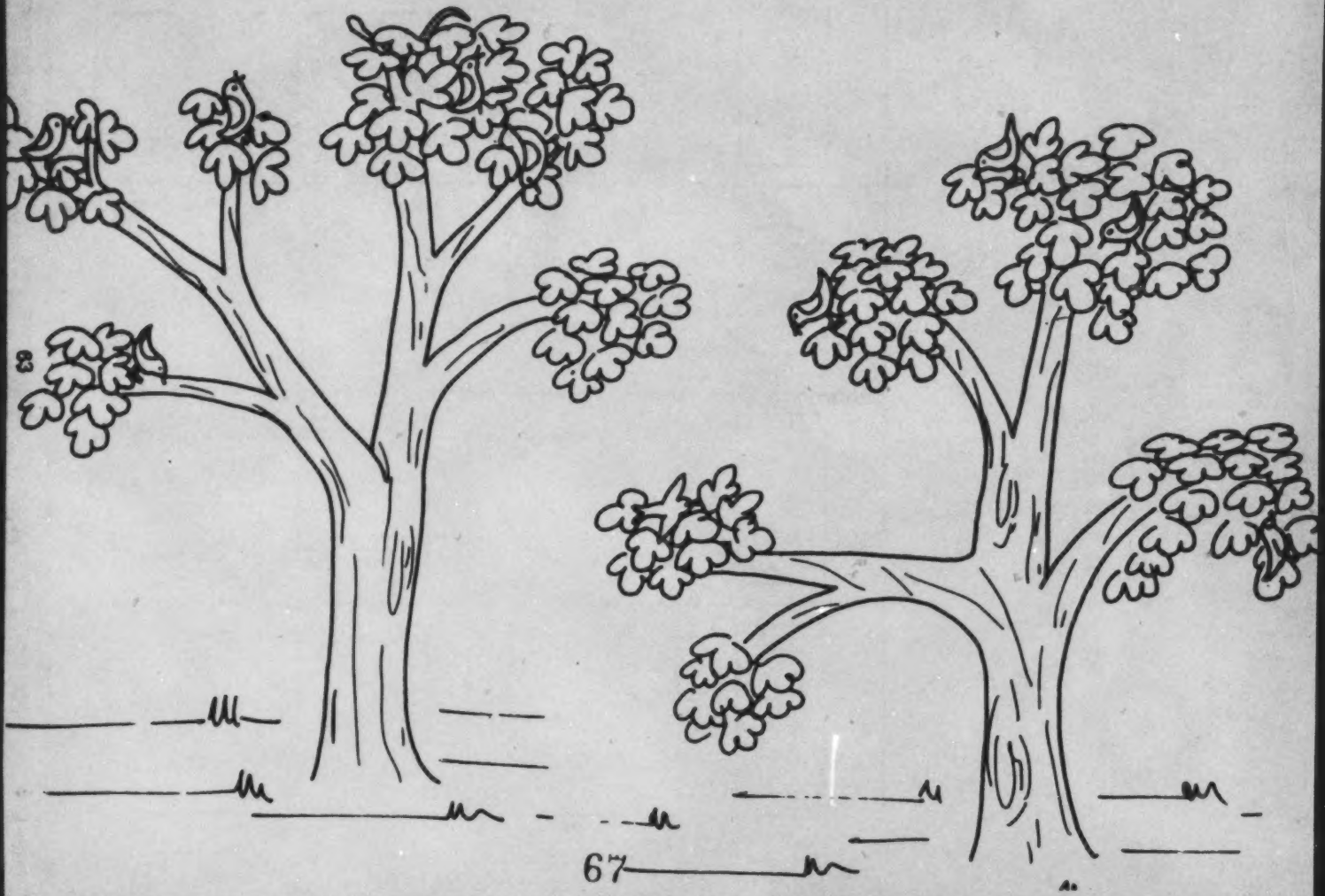
Track them down Can he find any other footprints?

Picture Puzzle

Remember:- If your child has difficulty with these activities try them later during the year. He may not be ready for them yet.

Picture Puzzle

There are ten birds hidden in the picture below. See how many your child can find without your help.



Shape Series

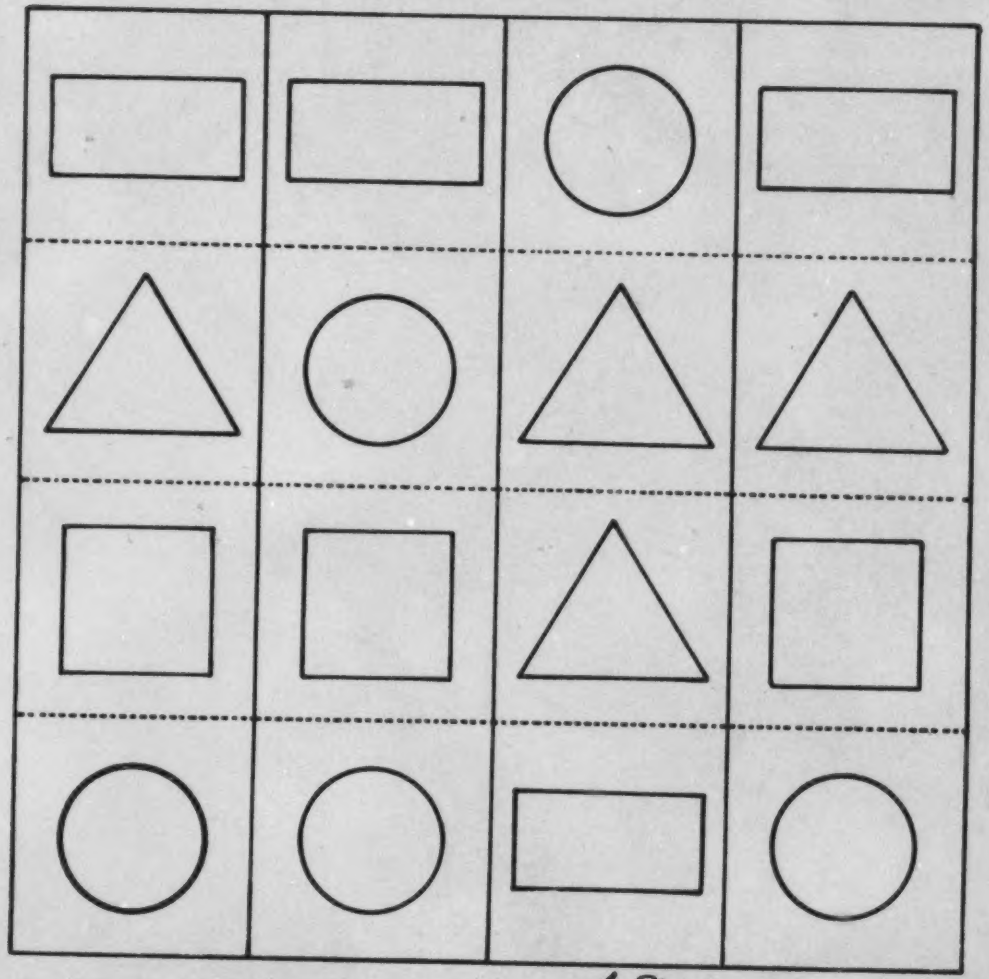
Below are four series of shapes. These shapes have been introduced into the program book, and are now presented in a different form, to assist your child in extending his visual perception.

Procedure

Cut along dotted lines and present each series separately, to your child.

You might ask

1. "Do all these shapes look the same?"
2. "Which one is different?"



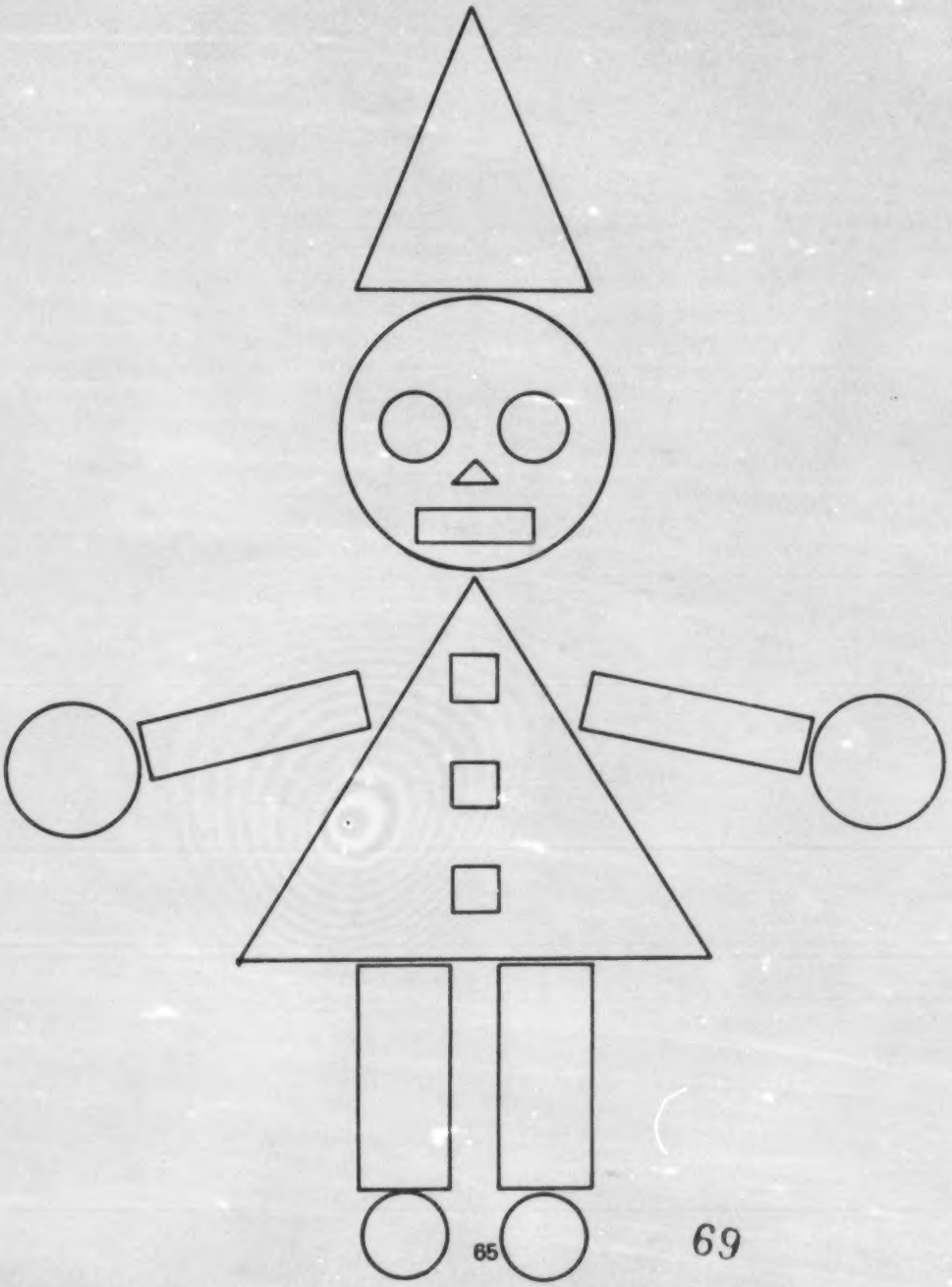
Mr. Shape Clown

Look at this funny clown - he's made up of shapes. Can you point to circles, triangles, rectangles and squares?

What shape is Mr. Shape Clown's hat? What else is the same shape as his hat?

What shape are his arms and legs? What other part of his body is this shape?

What parts of Mr. Clown's body are made of circles? Can you point to some little squares?



APPENDIX VI

STORY BOOK

The Story Book presents two stories, each of which illustrates areas of perception in an extended story form. Both stories reinforce all elements included in the Segment 4 lesson, as well as featuring animals and their relationship with people and other animals. The first story, "Whose cake was it?", is presented here.

my story book

MR TALL and MR SMALL

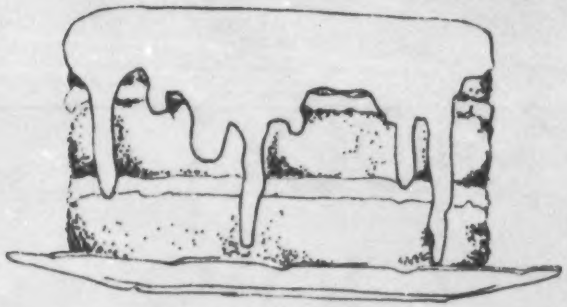
from a story by Barbara Brenner and Tomi Ungerer

WHOSE CAKE WAS IT?

from a story by Lucy Sprague Mitchell

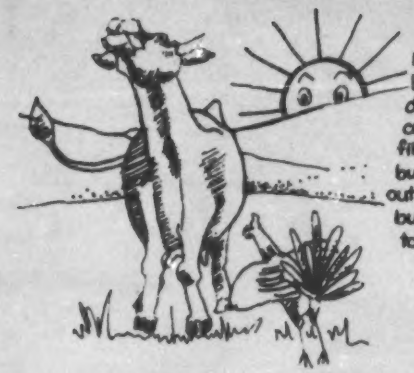
the queensland state pre-school correspondence program 4-77

Whose Cake was it?



Once there was a wonderful birthday cake. It had three large, mouth-watering layers, white and soft, with cream filling in between. Over the top and running down the sides was white sugar icing. The cake was completely white, except for a pink name on the top. Now the question was: WHOSE CAKE WAS IT?

There were many animals and plants and people who thought it was THEIR cake. And this is why.



The cow thought it was her cake. For how could there be a cake without milk? And didn't she give the milk for the cake and the cream for the filling? And what about the butter? Wasn't butter made out of milk? She really gave the butter, too. So the cow mooed to herself and proudly thought, "Of course, it's MY cake."

"Cluck, cluck, cluck," cackled the hen. "You didn't give the eggs, did you cow? I'm the one who gave the eggs for the cake and the filling." So the hen went on cackling to herself and proudly thought, "Of course, it's MY cake."

The wheat and the sugar-cane both thought the cow and the hen were wrong. "It's my cake," whispered the wheat. "How could the cake be light without my flour?" "No, it's my cake," rustled the sugar-cane. "How could the cake be sweet without my sugar?" So they each tossed their grassy arms in the wind, and proudly thought, "Of course, it's MY cake."

The candles had still another idea. They thought, "The cow and the hen and the wheat and the sugar-cane may be right about the cake part of the cake. But this is a birthday cake. And the candles are what make a plain cake into a birthday cake. Wait until we are lit and you will see that we are the most important part of the cake." So as the candles waited to be lit, they proudly thought, "Of course, the cake belongs to US."

This cake had been made in the kitchen. Mummy mixed the milk, the eggs, the flour and the sugar into a batter. She put the batter into three pans and put the pans into the hot oven to bake. While the cake was baking, she made the cream filling and the white icing. When the cake was baked, Mummy spread the filling between the layers, and over the top and down the sides, she spread the white icing.

Into some of the icing, she put a drop of pink colouring. Then she filled a little tube with the pink icing. She squeezed the tube and, as the pink icing came out she wrote a name on top of the cake. Then she opened the packet of candles Daddy had brought home yesterday. She put on five candles but she didn't light them. She smiled at the white cake proudly. "My cake came out well," she thought. Of course she thought it was HER cake, for she had made it, hadn't she?

The cake was for Maggie's birthday party. In the afternoon five children came to the party because Maggie was five years old today. When Mummy carried in the birthday cake, the five candles had little flickering flames on top of them. "Oh!" said Maggie. "Don't you think my cake is beautiful?" Of course, Maggie thought it was HER cake for there, right on top of the cake, was her name in pink - MAGGIE.

They all sat down at the table. There was an empty chair for Daddy when he came home. Mummy helped Maggie cut the cake into big slices. They cut a big slice for each child who came to the party and a big slice for Mummy and another slice for Maggie. They put the last big slice on a plate in front of Daddy's empty chair. Then they began to eat the cake. They ate and ate till every crumb was eaten except Daddy's big slice. And each child said, "My cake was wonderful." Of course the children thought it was THEIR cake, for they had each eaten a big slice of it, hadn't they?

The children were just licking the white icing off their fingers, when in walked Daddy. "Hello everyone," he said, as he sat down with them all. He gave each child a little piece of his big slice of cake. Then he ate up the rest of his slice till there wasn't a crumb left. "Our cake was wonderful," he said. OUR cake!

What do you think the cow, the hen, the wheat and the sugar-cane, the candles, and Mummy, Maggie and the children who came to the party, thought now?

Whose cake do YOU think it was?

APPENDIX VII

SEGMENT CASSETTE TAPE

The following poems and songs have been selected as being representative of all those included on the Segment 4 tape. Each of the poems and songs incorporate a number of tasks for the child to follow. Also included in the Appendix are the scripts for two games and a picture story. This story comprises six pictures, which the child looks at while listening to the tape.

SEGMENT TAPE

The segment 4 cassette tape is designed as an auditory aid to accompany the segment booklet, 'Perception'. Accompanying the tape is a script sheet, comprising all poems and songs included on the tape, as well as a work sheet, which requires the child, to undertake two manual tasks during the course of the tape. The third printed sheet, relates the pictorial story of a child named Barnaby.

The story is told by the tape, rather than by written words. This task is more difficult as the child is required after the tape is finished to retell the story in his own words. With both a child and the story teller relating the story, the listener is led through a range of experiences associated with barefootedness.

The tape approximately 45 minutes long, uses each of the five elements discussed in the segment booklet. This tape is designed to reinforce and accompany all lessons, with the assistance of a female leader and piano and guitar accompaniment. Each section of the tape follows the order of the lesson guide, which are separated by a repetitive theme. The first section encourages the use of visual perception to observe all shapes of physical objects surrounding the child. Differentiation between fixed and moving shapes, such as wheels, rugs and clouds and dough are highlighted. These shape associations provide an introduction for the first task, 'the shape game', in which six shape cut-outs are provided for shape differentiation. While this game is taking place, instructions are given through a song. The object of this section is to encourage the child to observe all shapes around him.

The second section is auditory perception. The child is encouraged to become aware of all sounds around him in his home environment. With the 'hammer song', in each verse instructions are given to encourage the child to learn counting, and to reinforce the sound of hammering.

The contrast between loud and quiet familiar household sounds, such as clocks, brooms, electric mixers and bath time noises are highlighted, and are designed to encourage the child to become more observant in the home environment.

The song Mr Funny Feet, combines a male with the female voice. This task song requires the child to follow instructions which are given at the end of each line, followed by physical activity. All the examples given include familiar noises from such objects as the mail plan, crop dusting plane, helicopters used for mustering cattle, and trains. After the task song of 'five little aeroplanes', which requires the child to partake in additional physical activity, there is a change to a quieter observational task.

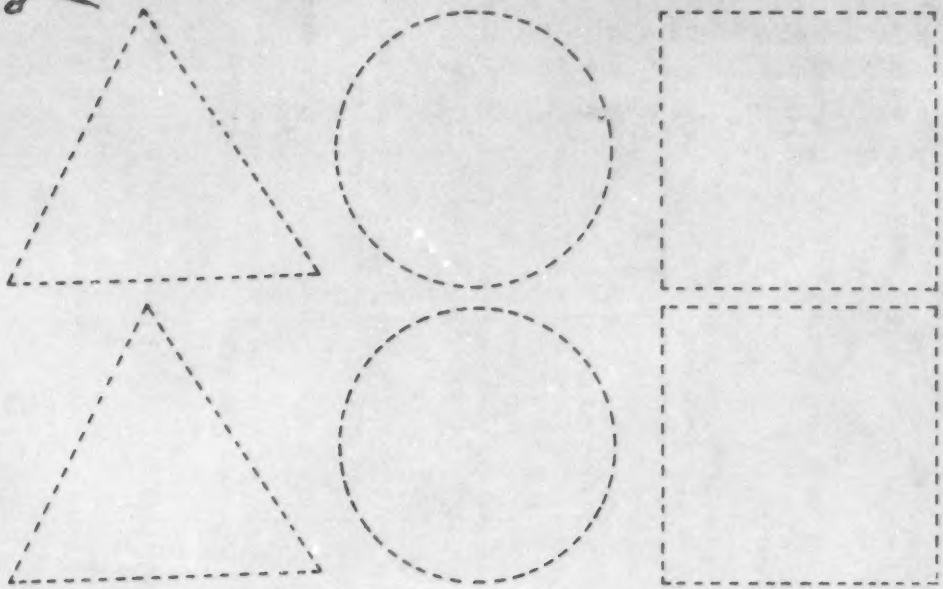
After discussion on tactile perception, particularly with the use of feet and hands, the story of Barnaby illustrates this task. Oral and olfactory perceptions encourage a closer identification of the child with other children, who speak on the tape, each giving their own opinion of 'what is rough is rough, smooth, or smells good?' This level of communication between children raises the child's interest and level of personal contact with the material presented on the tape.

THE QUEENSLAND STATE PRE-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

SEGMENT 4 CASSETTE TAPE

Section 1. SHAPE GAME

. Cut out these shapes for your child before the tape starts.



. Spread one set out in front of your child.

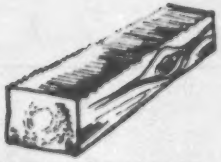
. Give him one shape from the other set, to hold.

. The song will ask him to find the shape that's the same as the one he's holding.

. Collect different shaped
* leaves
* household items - e.g. matchbox, saucer, envelope.

. Discuss their shapes with your child - then use them to play the game.

Section 3.



Corrugated cardboard, glued to a piece of wood.

Run a scraper along the teeth of a comb.

Saw notches in a length of broom handle - use a scraper.

Scraper: use a pencil, ice-cream stick, old toothbrush handle.

Scratch the ridged edge of your guiro to make a rhythm.

WORDS OF SONGS AND POEMS ON TAPE

SEGMENT 4

WHAT ARE MY EARS FOR

What are my ears for
Tell me that
What are my ears for
Tell me that
Ears are to hear with
Just to hear with
Ears are to hear with
Rat-a-tat-tat.

THE CONCRETE MIXER

With a swirl and a twirl
And a shiver and a scrunch
The concrete mixer
Is having his lunch
Cement and sand
Water and stones
He crunches them up
As if they were bones
With a swirl and a twirl
And a shiver and a scrunch
The concrete mixer
Is having his lunch.

ONE SHAPE - THREE SHAPES

You hold one shape
Here are three shapes
Can you see the one that is
just like yours?
You hold one shape
Here are three shapes
Come and find the one that is
just like yours.

I AM THE LITTLE GUIRO

I am the little guiro
Scratch me, from head to toe
I am the little guiro
Scratch me from head to toe.

MR. FUNNY FEET

First I walk upon my toes
Then upon my heels I go
On the sides of my feet I go
clump, clump, clump.
And with my feet together I go
jump, jump, jump.

LISTEN TO SOUNDS AROUND YOU

Listen to sounds around you
Listen to them do
Listen to sounds around you
Listen carefully do
La la la la la la
Listen carefully do
La la la la la la
What sounds good to you.

THE RAILROAD TRAIN

Clickety clack-alunk-a lunk
A train is coming a-chunk a-chunk
A clickety clack along the way
It hasn't a second of time to stay
It sings a noisy clackety song
A rickety, rockety, rackety song
Get off the track
It isn't where you belong.

CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Our small kitchen clock
Goes TICK-TACK-TICK-TACK
TICK-TACK-TICK-TACK.

Our great grandfather clock
Goes TICK-TOCK
TICK-TOCK.

THE WINDMILL

The windmill is turning around and around
While the windmill is turning
It's making this sound
Whoo-Whoo-Whoo - Whoo.

FIVE LITTLE AEROPLANES

Five little aeroplanes
Ready to roar
One flew up in the sky
Then there were four.

Four little aeroplanes
Stood near to me
One flew up in the sky
Then there were three.

Three little aeroplanes
All coloured blue
One flew up in the sky
Then there were two.

Two little aeroplanes
Out in the sun
One flew up in the sky
Then there was one.

One little aeroplane
Ready to run
It flew up in the sky
Then there were none.

QUEENSLAND STATE PRE-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

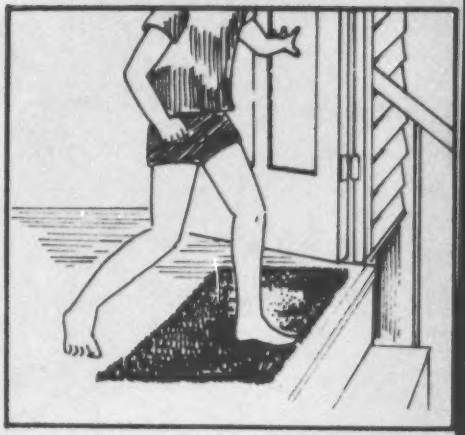
BARNABY PICTURE SEQUENCE

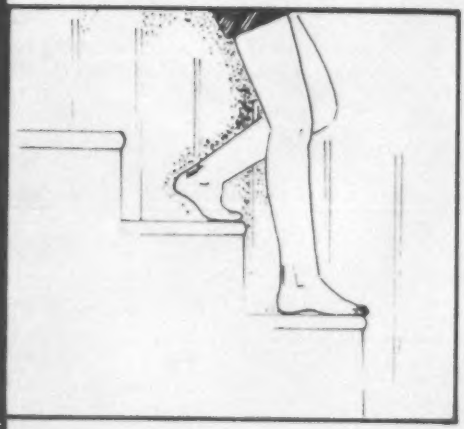
Procedure:

Let your child listen to the story of Barnaby on Side 1 on the Cassette Tape; then let him look at the six pictures, and retell the story to you in his own words.

Perhaps your child would like to record his version of Barnaby on tape or you could write his comments on the page opposite.

If he is interested, cut the pictures out, and let him rearrange them to suit his version of the story.





APPENDIX VIII

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET

The eighth appendix comprises the Teacher Information Sheet, a form designed so that the parent-teacher can provide information concerning the child's individual development and interests to the pre-school correspondence unit. This form provides space for the parent to indicate the child's responsiveness to each of the task components of Segment 4. The following pages are considered representative of the content and layout of the whole form which requires that the parent provide in some detail the nature and scope of the child's manual creativity and physical activity as evidenced in their responses to the Segment materials.

THE QUEENSLAND STATE PRE-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET

SEGMENT

Perception

4

Yes! It is different! We have changed the Teacher Information Sheet to help you give us more information about your child's individual development — his interests, and abilities. By learning more about your child at his own stage of development, his teacher can provide an individual program for him.

CHILD'S NAME.....Age.....yrs.....mths.

ADDRESS.....

.....Post Code.....

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER.....

Would you please consider the following questions in relation to the particular areas you and your child have covered and return with samples of your child's work.

Our powers of "perception" develop through our "five senses" so Segment 4 PERCEPTION is dealt with under the following headings.

VISUAL PERCEPTION (*sight*)	. vocabulary . colour . shape . size
AUDITORY PERCEPTION (*hearing*)	. vocabulary . listening to sounds . discriminating between sounds . responding to sounds
TACTILE PERCEPTION (*touch*)	. vocabulary . texture . identification by touch
ORAL PERCEPTION (*taste*)	. vocabulary . experience in distinguishing foods by taste
OLFACTORY PERCEPTION (*smell*)	. vocabulary . identifying similarities and differences

Activities provided (please name as in Program Book)	What materials were used? e.g. paint, drum, scarves, boxes	Where was the Activity set up? e.g. kitchen table, verandah, outside	Who Participated?	What assistance did your child receive?	Describe your child's response e.g. imaginative; eager to try again.

SEGMENT TAPE

A shape game was presented on the tape to help increase your child's awareness of shapes.

Did he participate in the game?

Yes	No

Did he have any difficulty in picking out any of the following shapes? If (yes), please tick those he had difficulty with.

triangle	
circle	
square	

A carpentry activity was mentioned in the tape.

Has your child attempted any carpentry activities?

Yes	No

In each Segment Tape a simple musical instrument has been suggested for you and your child to make.

Have you been able to make any of the following?

	Drum
	Shakers
	Tone Block
	Rhythm Sticks
	Guiro

Other (please specify) .....

Which home-made instruments does your child enjoy the most?

Please comment _____

_____

_____

Do you feel the pace of the songs is

Too Fast	Suitable	Too Slow

for your child to sing along with.

Have you noticed your child using new words heard on the Tape?

Yes	No

If so, please give some examples _____

_____

_____

PARENT INFORMATION

The Parent Information booklet, "Contact", contains sections on children's growth and development, book, record and equipment reviews and helpful hints and ideas.

To assist us in planning future issues of "Contact", we would appreciate your comments on the following -

What has been your reaction to the "Contact", booklets presented to date?

_____

_____

_____

Please tick any of the following sections of "Contact" which you have found useful?

Children's growth and development	
Book, record and equipment reviews	
Helpful hints and ideas	

Do you consider the sections on children's growth and development have assisted in furthering your understanding of your pre-school child?

Yes	No

Has the content of the articles on child development been

too brief	
adequate	
too detailed	

Are there any other topics you would like to see discussed in future issues of "Contact".

Yes	No

If (yes), please give details _____

_____

_____

Are you interested in using the "Contact" booklet to exchange suggestions and ideas with other parents?

Yes	No

If (yes), please forward them to your teacher.

Parent's Signature ..... Date .....

PERFORATION

Content of Span Equipment Kit

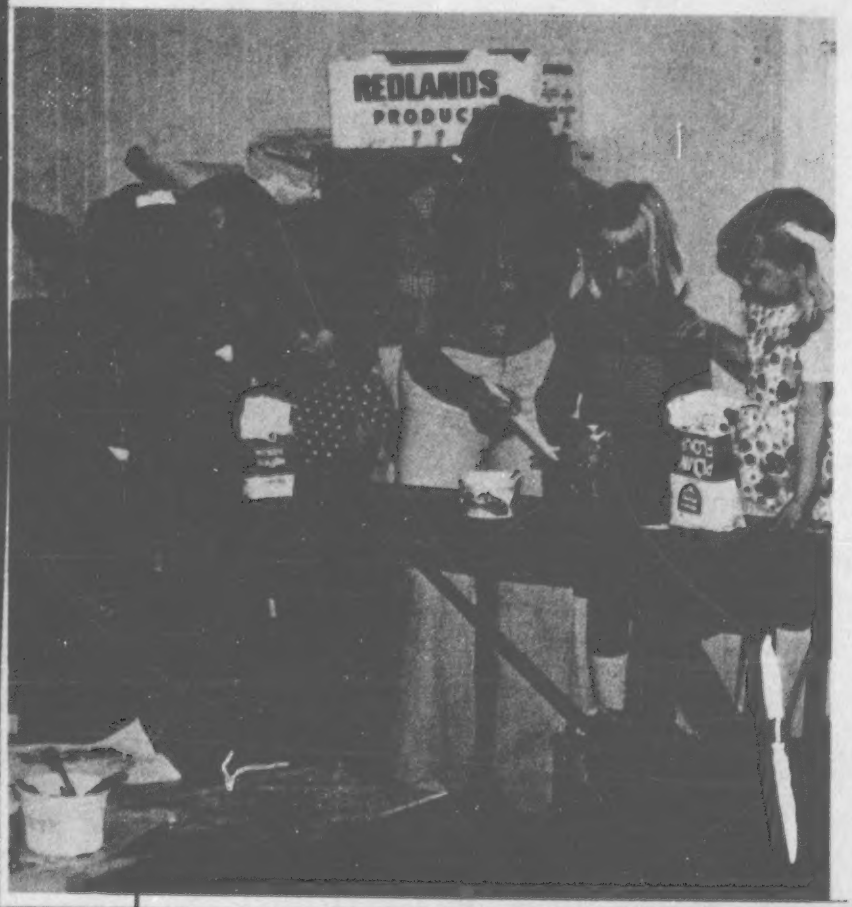
1	Pre.2	Small Metal Scissors
5	Pre.6	Sheets Coloured Cardboard 63.5 cm x 51 cm Assorted Colours
2	Pre.10	Brushes Hogshead Round Fitches No. 6
2	Pre.11	Brushes Hogshead Round Fitches No. 8
1	Pre.12	Paste Brushes 11.5 cm Handle 2.5 cm Bristle
1	Pre.13	Brushes, Paint 2.5 cm Flat
1	Pre.14A	Tin, Water Soluble Dye Stuffs – Blue
1	Pre.14B	Tin, Water Soluble Dye Stuffs – Red
1	Pre.14C	Tin, Water Soluble Dye Stuffs – Yellow
1	Pre.15	Tin, Water Poster Paint
1	Pre.16	Tin, Black Poster Paint
¼	Pre.18	Reams Bulky Directory Paper
1	Pre.22	pkt Coloured Pencils, Assorted Colours pkt of 12
1	Pre.141	5 cm x 7.5 cm Magnifying Glass
1	Pre.142	Bar Magnet
1	Pre.410	pkt Chubletes (Assorted Colours)
1	Pre.800	Aquadhere 250 ml

APPENDIX IX

SPAN EQUIPMENT KIT

A kit of basic play equipment is sent to each SPAN playgroup. An extensive selection of materials, construction sets, cognitive games and musical instruments are provided in this kit. In addition, materials such as paper, paints, crayons and glue are provided for the playgroup. The following photograph represents the equipment included in most of the basic SPAN equipment kits.

what is a playgroup

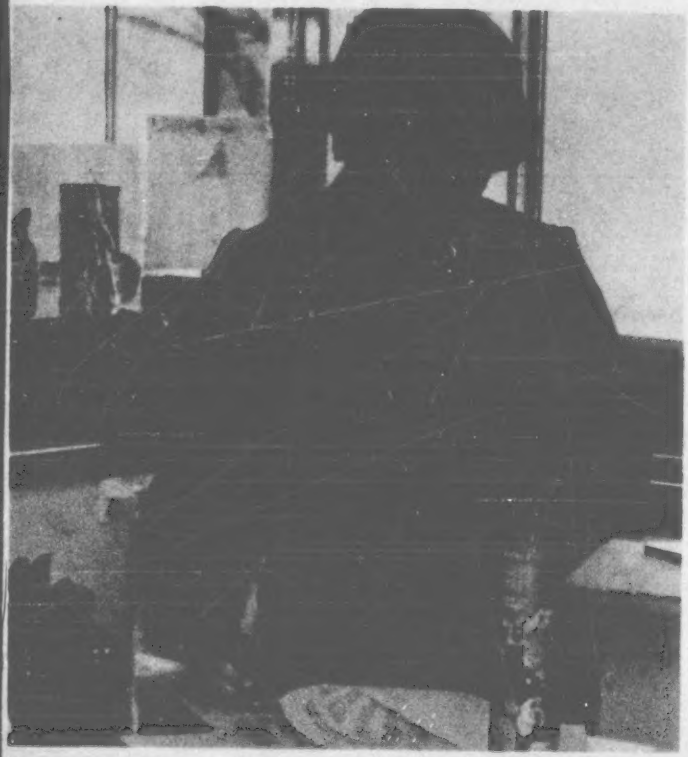


A playgroup is a group of children with a supporting group of adults - exploring, learning and adjusting socially in a play situation. There is companionship and communication through action and words with other children and adults and through listening, talking and sharing.

Joining a playgroup offers an opportunity for families to work together to help children - and so provides a bridge between the family and the community in which they live.

what is span

SPAN is an extension of Pre-School Correspondence involving families on the program in meeting with other parents and pre-school children in their area, to form SPAN Playgroups.



span is...

. playing, learning, growing, making friends, exchanging ideas, sharing experiences and discussing problems

. seeing your children learn and sharing their satisfaction and their excitement

. taking the experience back home

working with children

Remember when you were a child what it felt like to paddle in the water, to bury your toes in the sand, to be so interested in simple actions .... dropping stones into a bucket of water, hearing the splash and catching the ripples.

Remember the satisfaction of repeating the process, and how much you appreciated the interest of an adult.

TAKE TIME TO OBSERVE

Notice how long children stay at one activity, how they use the materials, what they are saying, and the number of times actions are repeated.

APPRECIATE WHAT YOU SEE

Watch the spontaneous involvement of children in each other's play and the physical effort involved in for example, dragging large boxes around.

See how new ideas spring up in their play as they handle the materials (on one hand ideas may grow out of each other, on the other, his interest may switch to something entirely different).

ASSIST IF NECESSARY

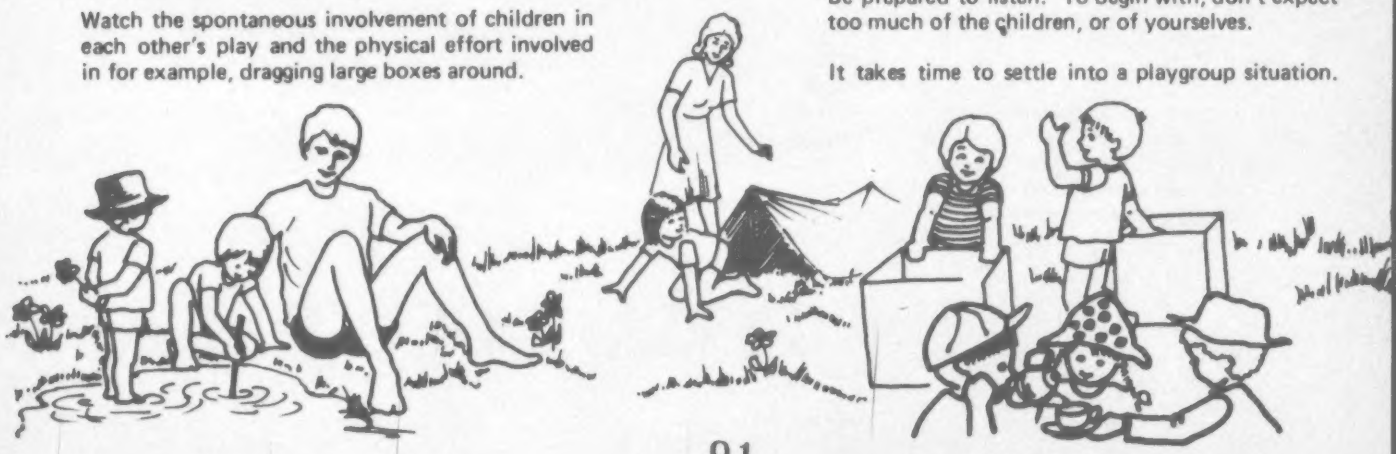
Observation and appreciation of your child's play will enable you to help children find a solution to a problem, for example - "How could we make the roof higher, so you could walk inside?"

Help them to see different ways of working with a variety of materials.

ABOVE ALL RELAX

Be prepared to listen. To begin with, don't expect too much of the children, or of yourselves.

It takes time to settle into a playgroup situation.



forming a span group

Now that you have decided to form a SPAN Playgroup you will be eager to begin.

YOUR FIRST STEP

Contact other mothers in your area who are interested in forming a Playgroup and plan a time for an informal meeting to discuss basic planning and guidelines.

YOUR FIRST MEETING

Your parent group will need to decide on how your group will operate.

For instance you will need to consider -

. where to meet
. how often
. size of group
. when to meet
. sharing of responsibilities
. safety precautions
. co-operating in a group
. approach to discipline

At your first meeting it is important that these topics are discussed openly by the parent group. Much of the success of your parent group will depend upon the willingness of group members to work as a team. In setting down general guidelines for the operation of your SPAN group it is important to remember that once a group decision is made then all parents need to adhere to these decisions. It will be inevitable that as your group develops certain changes will occur. This is just part of the group's natural evolvment. Just try to keep in mind that any changes affecting the parent group need to result from group decisions. "Snap" decisions made by one individual can often lead to unfortunate group frustration.

points to consider

WHERE TO MEET

Where possible choose a place which is central and convenient to all families involved. It may be a hall, private home, local school, showgrounds, or shed.

HOW OFTEN

Frequency of SPAN sessions will vary from weekly, fortnightly to monthly meetings depending on distances to be travelled, petrol prices, road surfaces and home commitments.

Families in closely populated areas may be able to meet more frequently than those in isolated areas.

SPAN sessions can possibly be organized to coincide with meetings in your district such as C.W.A., sale day, or tennis gatherings.

SIZE OF GROUP

A group of 8 - 10 children is an ideal size. Large groups can be an overwhelming experience for young children and also difficult to manage.

For many children this may be their first experience as a member of a playgroup. A small group will help them to settle in more easily and provide more opportunities for participation in activities. As a parent you will learn more about the children, their interests and abilities.

If you have a large group of children to cater for, consider dividing the one large into -

. two smaller groups - one catering for children 3 years and over and the other children under 3 years.

. or two smaller groups each including toddlers and pre-schoolers.

If each group is identified as a SPAN group they will each be entitled to a SPAN Equipment Kit.

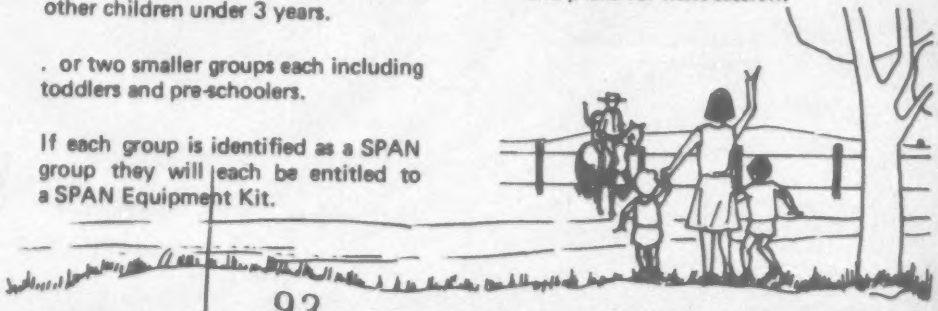
You will find that toddlers can use much of the same equipment as the pre-schoolers, but they use it in a different way.

WHEN TO MEET

Sessions may vary in length from morning to afternoon or to all day meetings.

Where possible keep the sessions short, approximately 2½ hours so that the children do not become too tired.

Try holding your parent group discussion immediately after the play session. This is the best time to discuss the happenings of the day. e.g. children's involvement in the program, any difficulties which arose and plans for next session.



co-operating in a group

Parents vary considerably in the way they 'bring up' their children. This is quite understandable, because as people we vary in the way we behave. These attitudes naturally influence our approaches to 'child rearing' and to some extent reflect the way in which we were 'brought up' ourselves.

When parents choose to join a playgroup it is inevitable that the group of adults involved will have very different approaches towards working with young children. It is important to be conscious of this fact and to take the opportunity early in your parent discussions to exchange viewpoints and to decide upon the approaches the group will use in helping children towards co-operative behaviour.

Young children need first hand experiences in learning to get along with others. This is a natural part of their social learning. Through their play they observe and imitate the actions and language of others. Adults, in turn, provide a model for children in the way they behave and in the style of language they use.

Here are some examples which illustrate the style of language which can be used by adults in encouraging co-operative behaviour in young children.

Come on Jim, everyone helps at tidying away time. Come and help me pick up these blocks.

It's Wendy's turn now Mary, you've just had your turn.

Jenny is good at patting the sand down hard. Can she help too?

The cups and the jug belong in the cupboard. John will you find some people to help you carry these?

Presenting language in a positive way provides children with clear guidelines as to the way in which you would like them to behave. At the same time it suggests definite 'limits'. You will find generally that if you approach young children in a positive friendly way they will respond likewise. This is so much more effective than always saying DON'T.

approaches to discipline

"If only the experts could tell us how to get our children to do as they are told."

There are times when that is exactly what a parent needs: some sure way which will encourage children to pay attention and do as they are asked. The trouble is there is a wide gap between what parents want and what children like to do. The desires of each are worlds apart. It is no wonder then that almost in every home discipline is a very real problem. Still, any parent who is unsure of what to do or how to go about solving the problem can at least have comfort in knowing that almost all other parents feel the same way!

What about a playgroup situation then?

What should you do in a group situation when children misbehave?

Why do they act the way they do?

What can you do about it?

All children need action. As they grow they are learning about their world through their own discovery. Essentially, they need lots of activity, attention and praise and the feeling that someone cares for them even though we might not always approve of all they do!

Try to remember that all behaviour has a cause, yet often there is no single explanation for why a child 'acts' the way he does. He could be tired, sick, lonely, jealous, angry, frustrated or all of these put together. Adults often feel just the same way.

When working on your basic approaches to discipline at your SPAN Playgroup meetings try these ideas. Often careful planning of a program will help in keeping behaviour problems to a minimum.

GUIDELINES TO USE

. Plan an interesting program for your SPAN day.
. Check to see how the play area looks. Is it neat and attractive with clearly defined areas of play? Too much equipment can cause children to feel confused and irritable - a jumbled untidy scene is almost sure to cause misbehaviour.
. Allow plenty of time. Children need time to think through their ideas.
. Work as a team keeping in mind that the person responsible for a particular area is also responsible for the behaviour of those children working in that area.

. Have a few firm rules and see they are consistently kept.
. Ensure each child is familiar with the routine for the day.
. Be aware of what is going on at all times so that you can step in and prevent trouble happening.
. Accept that all children are individuals and that what is 'right' or 'works' with one child will not necessarily work with another.

HELPFUL HINTS

Help children feel good about themselves. *Try not to embarrass or belittle children.*

Show your interest in what they have to say. *Avoid threatening. Threats make a child feel uneasy. They deal with the future and young children live in the present.*

Use short, simple sentences when explaining to a child. *Avoid talking excessively. Children cannot 'take in' long explanations.*

Give children an advance warning of lunch or tidy-up times. *Don't expect instant obedience. Remember children are people too.*

Have realistic espectations of children's behaviour. 2, 3, 4 and 5 year olds are all at very different stages. *Remember 3 year olds cannot act like 5 year olds.*

Remember that the tone of your voice will set the tone of the playgroup. *Never yell at children to get them to stop yelling. Talking quietly yourself is more effective.*

Do be tolerant of a little grumbling. *Remember we all do our share of grumbling.*

Of course you do want children to know how to sympathise with others and to "know how it feels" but ... you the adult should show them *how* to act ... not how *not* to act. *Never bite, hit or scratch a child back when you want him to stop hurting another child. This behaviour provides a bad model for young children.*

PLANNING YOUR SESSION TIMES

When drawing up your timetable consider the following points -

. If the children have travelled long distances there might be a need to begin the program with morning tea.
. Children will need a quiet time alternated with periods of active play.
. Where possible include opportunities for outdoor play as well as indoor play.
. Active play first might be necessary if the children have been sitting for some time while travelling.

9·30 indoor play
10·25 tidy up
10·30 singing, movement, music
10·45 morning tea
10·55 outdoor play
11·40 tidy up
11·45 story
12·00 parent discussion

MOTHER ROSTER JUN 14

caring for toddlers · Mrs Brown
preparing & supervising activities } Mrs Jones, Mrs Evans
music and movement · Mrs Nolan
preparing materials for future sessions · Mrs Willis

TIMETABLE FOR HALF-DAY SESSION

Arrival of children throughout a session is disrupting to the whole group. It is important, therefore, that parents arrive on time for SPAN sessions. However, it is understood that there will always be the occasional late arrival due to unavoidable delays.

MOTHER ROSTER

. Organize your mother roster with everyone having some particular responsibility.
. Rotate responsibilities from session to session to enable each parent to experience working with children in different areas.
. Mothers responsible for supervising activities on their particular day need also to be responsible for the preparation of materials and the setting up of the Play Area. This will ensure that the day runs smoothly.

Display the parent rosters in a prominent position so that every parent is aware of her responsibilities for each session in advance.

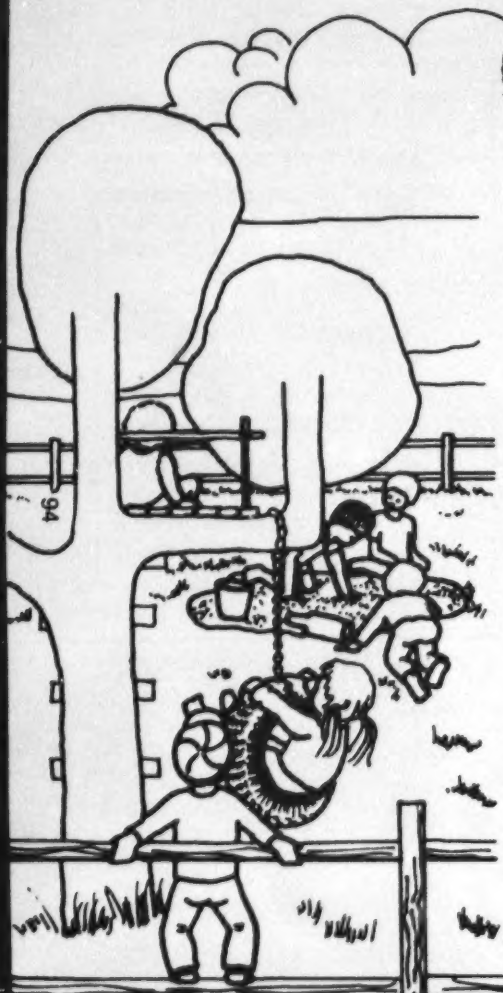
The suggested time allotments are only a guide. The times can be extended or shortened during the year according to the group interests, needs and ages.

10·00 snack and discussion
10·15 outdoor play
10·55 tidy up
11·00 singing, movement, music
11·15 morning tea
11·25 indoor play
12·10 tidy up
12·15 story
12·30 lunch
1·00 parent discussion

MOTHER ROSTER JUN 14

caring for toddlers · Mrs Smith
preparing & supervising activities } Mrs Inglis, Mrs Gilby
music and movement · Mrs Devlin
preparing materials · Mrs Briggs
supervising during discussion · Mrs Day

TIMETABLE FOR FULL-DAY SESSION



SETTING UP THE PLAY AREA

A play area needs to be divided into smaller areas for different activities so that children can readily see what is available and have the experience of making choices. It makes supervision easier too. Your play area might be inside a building or outdoors under some shady trees or it can incorporate both these areas depending on where your group meets.

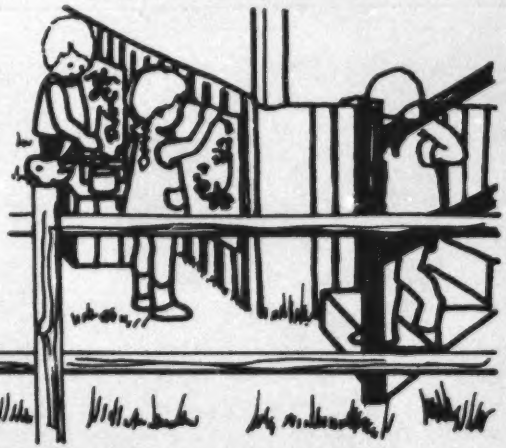
Consider the following when setting up your Play Area.

. Outdoor Area
. Creative Area
. Quiet Area
. Construction Area
. Home Corner Area

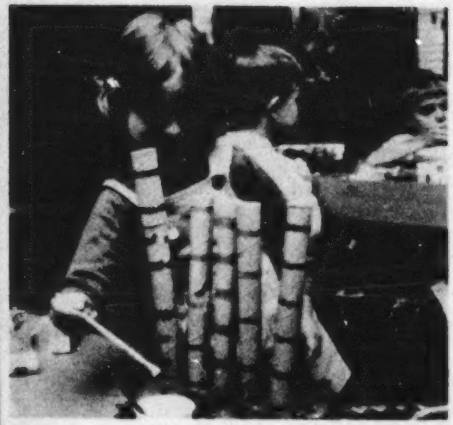
It is not necessary to include all these areas every session. It will depend upon the size of your Play Area, the number of children present and the activities and ideas you will wish to present on that particular day.

HELPFUL HINTS

. Use boxes, lines of chairs, clothes airers, screens of hessian to divide the room in activity areas.
. If each activity is easily accessible, it helps to avoid distraction and unnecessary accidents such as spilt paint, block buildings knocked over and fingers trodden on.
. Separate quiet areas from noisy areas. For example avoid putting library books or tapes near block building area.
. Avoid setting up the Construction Area and Home Corner Area too close together. These two areas involve group play and may become noisy.
. Place activities needing constant supervision such as finger painting and carpentry near each other so that one adult is able to keep an eye on both.



creative area



Every child needs the experience of working with creative materials. It offers opportunities for the expression of feelings and use of the imagination.

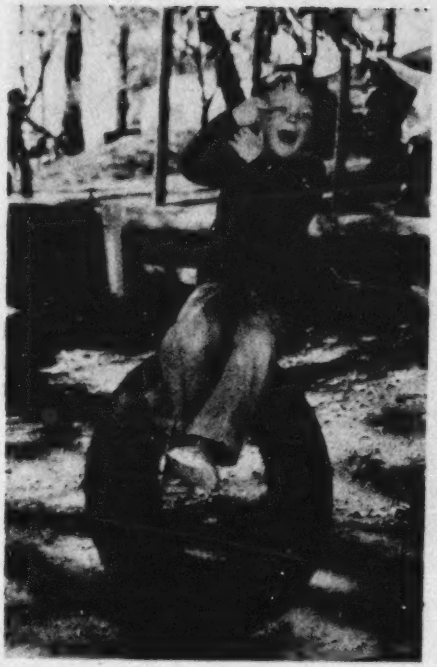
Through his own experimenting he learns about shape
size
texture
colour
while at the same time developing muscle control and eye/hand co-ordination.

outdoor area

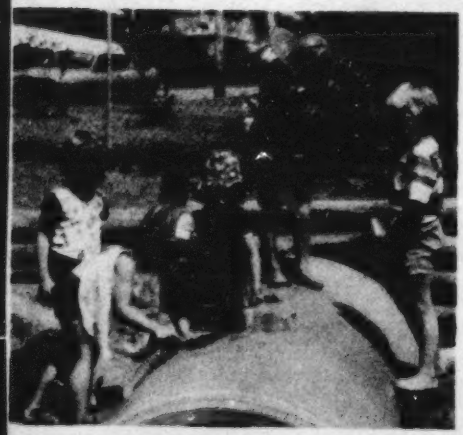
An outdoor area gives opportunities for children to be involved in sand, mud and water play as well as physical activities.

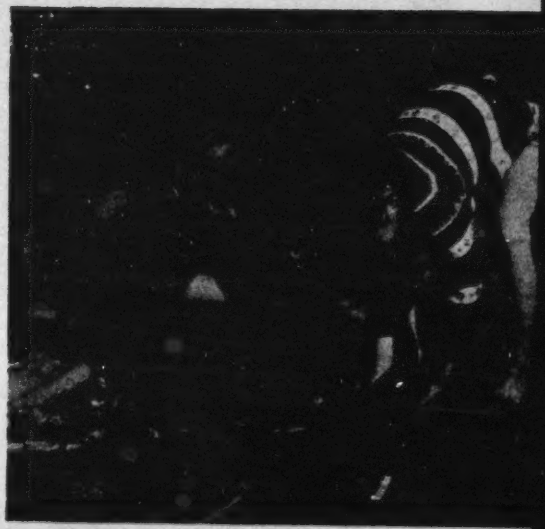
Mud, sand and water are the most familiar of all play materials.

While the children are having fun they are also learning to play together, co-operate, share, talk to each other and enjoy success.



For physical activities children need wide open spaces. Here their movements can be large and unrestricted and they can develop their co-ordination and physical skills such as catching, stretching, climbing, throwing, jumping and balancing.





quiet area

Children enjoy participating in quiet play as well as active play. They need time to reflect and sort out ideas in relation to what they know. Where possible provide an area where children can spend time on their own looking at books, doing puzzles, or perhaps talking about a bird's nest found on a nature walk. Sometimes you might provide story tapes or a simple science experiment to provide children with the opportunities of comparing, asking questions or just thinking and wondering.

construction area

Here a child is presented with countless opportunities for developing muscle control and eye/hand co-ordination. He can play by himself or with others - he can share and co-operate. As he lifts, moves and carries he is finding out about size, weight and shape. He might use the equipment to create his own play situation.

Using construction materials often means just handling them at first and so learning about their properties and later manipulating, experimenting and constructing. Some of the children's plans require the strength and co-operation of the group in building a house, manoeuvering boxes, etc. Repeating processes allows the young child to enjoy again, things he has already learned to do.

He can project his own pattern of the world into his play. He can build the feeling that the world is his to think about, to puzzle out, to understand.

Construction materials offer the child many choices in their use - many alternatives of seeing and expressing his ideas of his world.

Movable materials mean he can change his environment to his own satisfaction.

home corner

Home Corner needs to be large enough to accommodate at least three children playing comfortably. The children need to feel that it is their own special place so it is important to give this effect by screening off particular areas.

Add props such as:

- boxes or fruit cases for furniture
- old clothes for dressing up
- kitchen utensils in adult size
- old saucepans
- empty food packets
- dolls and bedding
- washing up bowl, sponges and teatowels
- dough
- rice, sugar, macaroni

Home Corner provides opportunities for children to dress up and act out everyday situations. They can imitate the adult world in this play area. It provides experience with language in group play where children can express feelings in their own way.

how did it go

At the end of each SPAN day allow time for the parent group to come together to discuss the day's program and talk about the problems encountered. The outcome of these discussions will help considerably in the planning of future SPAN sessions.

THE SPAN DIARY

The purpose of the SPAN Diaries is to assist teachers in understanding how each SPAN group is progressing and to provide help and support to parents. From the information received, teachers will be able to assist groups with future planning. The diary needs to include the contributions from the whole parent group. Now is the time to complete the SPAN Diary as you discuss the day's program. Remember to return your diaries to the correspondence unit at regular intervals.

When discussing the day's program, consider the following questions ....

CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Did the activity cater for the children's interests? If not, why not?

Could the activities be presented in a different way to provide further interest?

For example the children have been using their body weights to balance the seesaw in the playground. They discovered that two smaller children on one end of the seesaw and a bigger child on the other end would balance the seesaw.

Home made scales with different objects for weighing could be used to present the same idea.

Does any activity area need new interest?

. Perhaps it is time to change the equipment or add new materials
. Change the room arrangement
. Present some indoor activities outside.

Did the children understand the ideas presented? Do these ideas need to be presented again with further activities?

Was the day too long? Did the children become tired?

PRESENTATION

. Where was the activity set up? Perhaps it was too far from the other activities which tended to make the children feel isolated. The children may have been too hot if the activity was set up in the sun.
. Were there too many children at the activity?
. Perhaps too many adults overwhelmed the children?

MATERIALS

. Were the materials attractively presented?
. Was the activity too complicated needing much adult help?

Perhaps you expected the children to use the materials in a certain way which was beyond their capabilities.

Remember your child's correspondence teacher will be pleased to assist you with her ideas or to help solve problems.

APPENDIX X

SPAN SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The 'Magic of Words' and 'Ways with Words' constitute some of the supplementary materials forwarded to parents in the SPAN groups. These booklets form the first two volumes of the "Language and the Young Child"series . The first booklet provides parents with an introduction to the concept of language in its various forms. Parents are encouraged to develop and explore with their children such concepts as listening, talking, thinking, sharing and touching. All of these activities are considered to form the basis of an understanding of language.

The second booklet develops those concepts already considered in the first booklet. Children are set certain tasks which require a higher level of concentration and thought processing. The parents are encouraged to select suitable stories, poems and songs for the children in an effort to highlight their increasing listening ability and growing identification with words. This booklet also provides a number of future references for the parents, in terms of story books, song books, records and picture stories.

THE SPAN RESOURCE SERIES IS A PUBLICATION OF
SPAN, AN EXTENSION OF THE QUEENSLAND STATE PRE-SCHOOL
CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM OFFERING PLAYGROUP
OPPORTUNITIES TO ISOLATED QUEENSLAND FAMILIES

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the magic of words

LANGUAGE AND THE YOUNG CHILD · PART 1
SPAN RESOURCE SERIES · No 1

104

this booklet...

It's a funny thing how difficult it is to talk about language.

Although it is all around us and within us, it is very hard to put into words exactly what language really is!

So this booklet is a way of sharing ideas and feelings about words. It talks about the very personal way in which parents and children talk together, about the need to learn to speak and listen, and about the fun of using new words and listening to their sounds.

Parents can help this growth and development of language in a variety of ways that captures the imagination of their child and fosters curiosity about the 'Magic of Words.'

let's talk

The following activities are planned so that you can have fun together while your child is learning new words and practising using language.

Children like to talk about anything and everything that interests them.

By talking with their children,

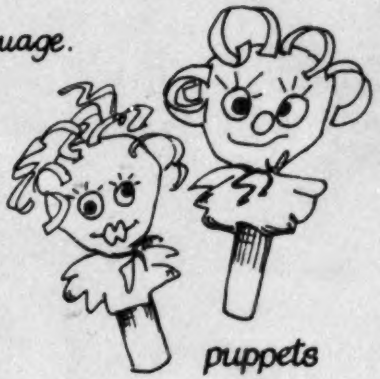
parents learn about their children, the way they think; how they feel and what's important to them.

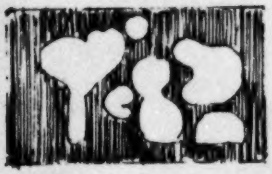
Parents and children learn about communicating with each other

Children learn to listen,
to express ideas and feelings,
to relate to others,
to enjoy conversation.

tell me a story

Stories are always popular and an ideal way to develop language.
They can be –



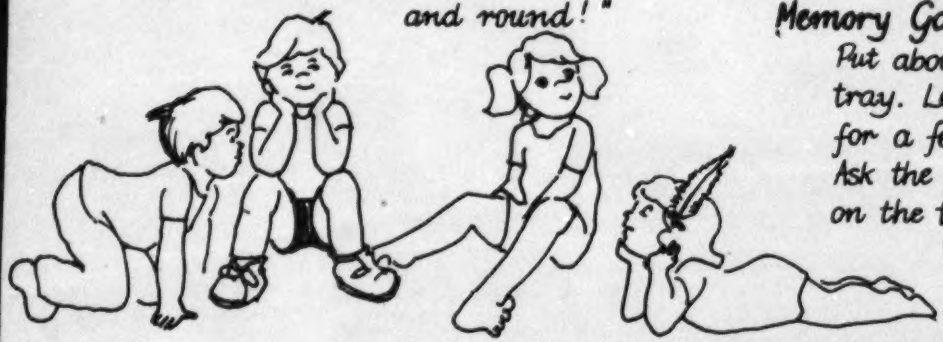


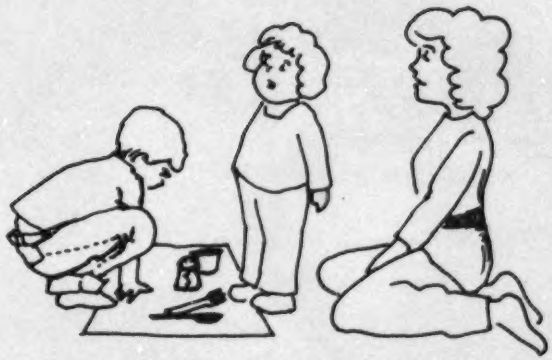
I spy...

I Spy –

Games like 'I spy' help children's concentration and growth of language. In working with young children you can substitute colour or size

"I spy with my little eye,
something that is
red
and round!"





Memory Games –

Put about six different articles on a tray. Let the children look at them for a few minutes, then cover them. Ask the children to tell you what was on the tray.

Variations:

Add an article – "Which did I add?"
Take one away – "Which did I take?"
"Which is made of wood?"
"Which is blue; which is round?"

sing a song

Children enjoy all sorts of songs.

ACTION SONGS

If you're happy and you know it
clap your hands . . .
stamp your feet . . .
nod your head . . .

SINGING GAMES

- Here we go round the Mulberry Bush
- Did you ever see a Lassie ?
- Punchinello
- The Farmer in the Dell . . .

Finger Play

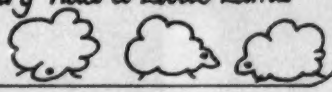
- Eency - weency Spider
- This is the Church
- On my head my hands I place
- Two Little Birds
- Five Little Soldiers

FOLK SONGS

- The Fox
- Skip to my Lou
- Waltzing Matilda
- The Barnyard Song
- A Frog he went a-courtin'.

nursery rhymes

- Humpty Dumpty
- Little Bo Peep
- Little Jack Horner
- Mary had a Little Lamb



MAKE UP SOME

Fit nonsense words to familiar tunes and rhythms made with home - made instruments.

SPAN

ways with words

LANGUAGE AND THE YOUNG CHILD · PART 2

SPAN RESOURCE SERIES · No 1

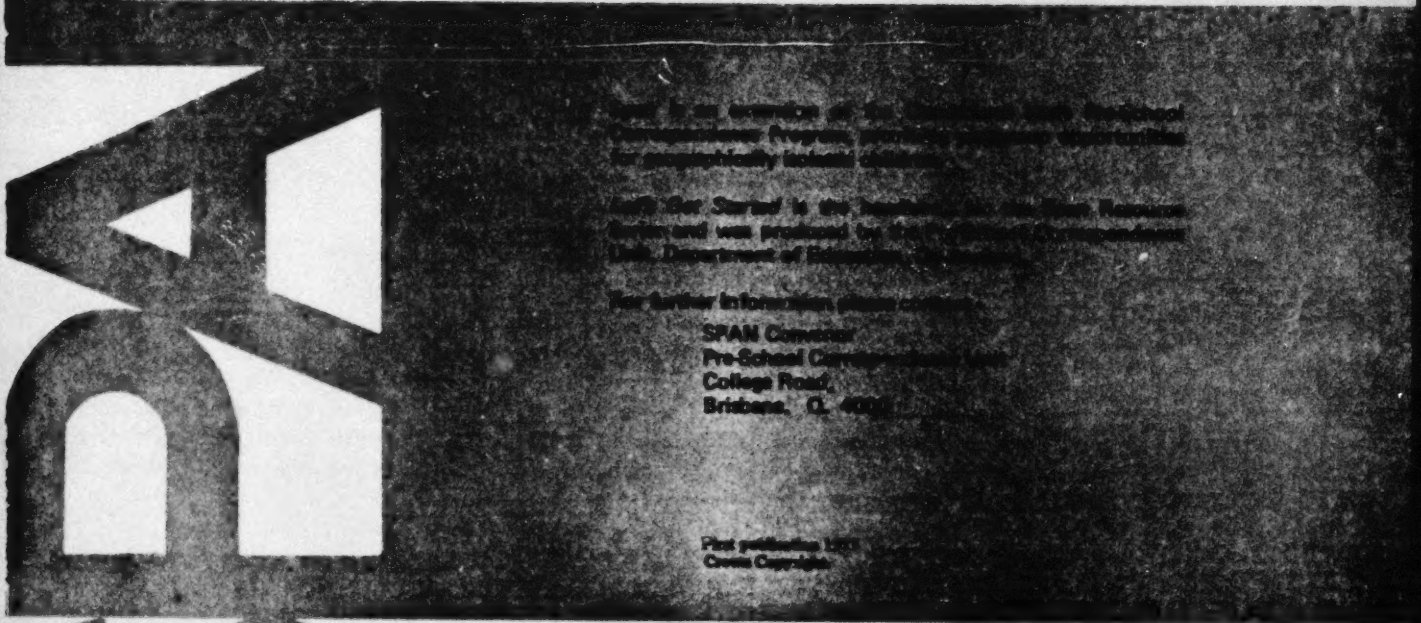
110

APPENDIX XI

INTRODUCING SPAN

This appendix introduces the three SPAN booklets, each of which is designed to assist parents in the establishment and running of a SPAN playgroup. The first of these booklets, "Let's Get Started", is an introductory handbook which provides parents with the necessary guidelines to establish with other parents the SPAN community playgroup. The following pages represent a sample of all the material presented in this series.

SPAN



SPAN Convenor
Pre-School Centre
College Road,
Brisbane, Q. 4068

First publication 1977
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let's get started

A HANDBOOK FOR SPAN PLAYGROUPS

Department of Education, Queensland

this booklet...

Young children learn to talk and listen, and they need lots of experience with language for this learning to take place.

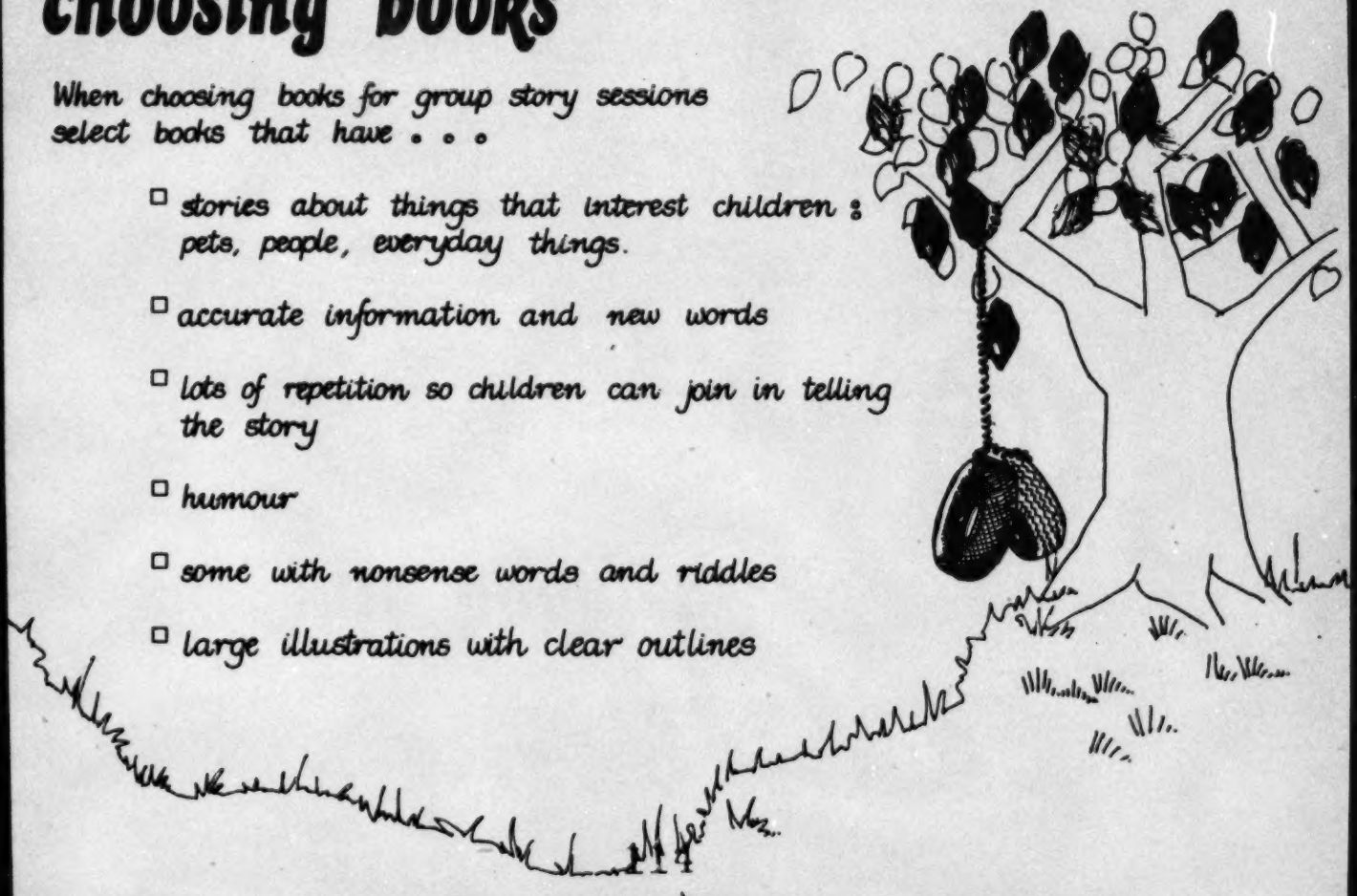
'Ways with Words' offers some suggestions for different ways of presenting these experiences to the young child.

We hope you will find them useful in planning group times for your Span sessions.

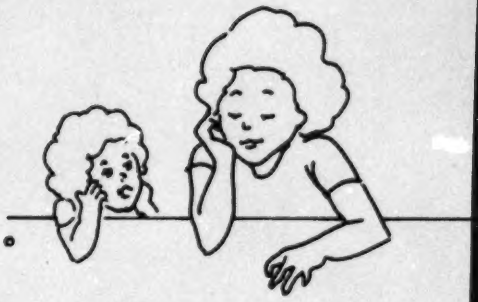
choosing books

When choosing books for group story sessions select books that have . . .

- ☐ stories about things that interest children : pets, people, everyday things.
- ☐ accurate information and new words
- ☐ lots of repetition so children can join in telling the story
- ☐ humour
- ☐ some with nonsense words and riddles
- ☐ large illustrations with clear outlines



children's own stories



Children love stories about themselves and will happily make up their own stories if encouraged. Adults can help them get started by . . .

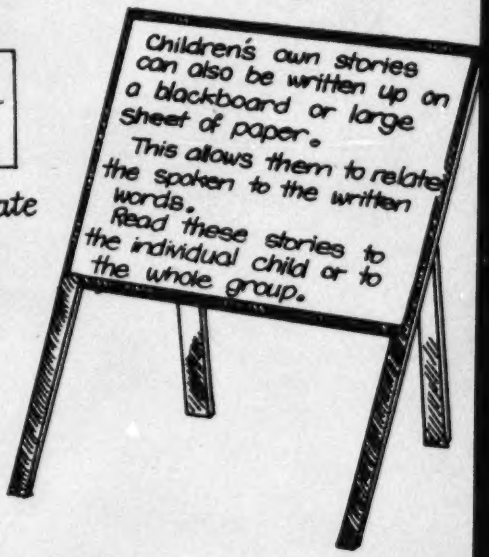
- ☐ providing sentence patterns for the child to complete

It was ……'s birthday, and he was …… years old.	There were lots of presents, but his favourite was a ……	

- ☐ recording his story, leaving room for him to illustrate
- ☐ asking open-ended questions to continue the story

  "Can you tell me what he called his puppy?"
  "What happened then to that little boy and his puppy?"

- ☐ stapling the pages together to make a book.


Children's own stories can also be written up on a blackboard or large sheet of paper.
This allows them to relate the spoken to the written words.
Read these stories to the individual child or to the whole group.

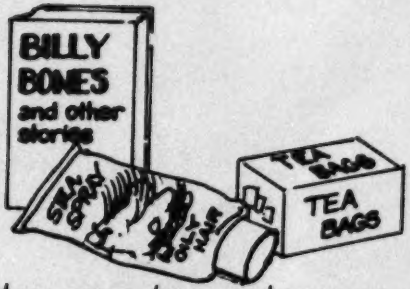
Some children may need very little prompting, or none at all, to make up their own stories.

Be sensitive to each child's interests, and abilities; appreciate his imagination – and the result will be fun!

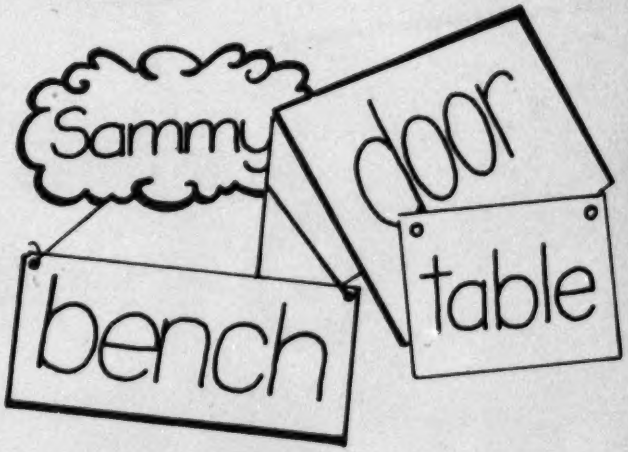
signs and labels

Many four year olds can recognize their own written names on paintings, parcels and letters, and can identify names on all sorts of objects.

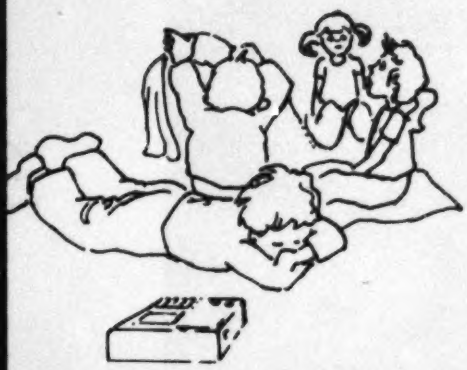
Another way to encourage interest in words is to put labels on familiar objects.



Children can be made more aware of words by drawing their attention to the words on a variety of objects.



segment tapes



At a group session, children can listen to a story from one of the segment tapes.

Taped stories can also be memorized by an adult and used as a told story or a flannelboard or blackboard story.

Why not have a drama session, and let the children act out suitable stories!

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